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# AFRICAN SECURITY CHALLENGES:

NOW AND OVER THE HORIZON

REFUGEES, INTERNALLY-DISPLACED PERSONS,  
AND MILITANCY IN AFRICA:  
CURRENT AND/OR FUTURE THREAT?

JANUARY 2010  
WORKING GROUP  
DISCUSSION REPORT

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*Contributed Essay:*  
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THE DEFENSE THREAT REDUCTION AGENCY  
Advanced Systems and Concepts Office

Report Number ASCO 2010-002



# **African Security Challenges: Now and Over the Horizon**

**Refugees, Internally-Displaced Persons, and Militancy in  
Africa: Current and/or Future Threat?**

## **WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION REPORT**

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**January 2010**

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**Defense Threat Reduction Agency  
Advanced Systems and Concepts Office  
Report Number ASCO 2010-002**

**DTRA01-03-D-0017, Task Order 0018-08-03**

The mission of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) is to safeguard America and its allies from weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high explosives) by providing capabilities to reduce, eliminate, and counter the threat, and mitigate its effects.

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In particular, we would like to acknowledge Dr. Sarah Kenyon Lischer, Wake Forest University, for contributing a foundational paper to initiate discussion and Dr. Jessica Piombo, Naval Postgraduate School, for assisting with discussion moderating duties and lending her expertise to the discussion. We’d also like to thank Dr. Vera Achvarina, University of Toronto; Dr. Karen Jacobsen, Tufts University; Mr. Stephen Allen, Tufts University; and Mr. David Hamon, Defense Threat Reduction Agency for lending their expertise to our discussion. We would like to acknowledge those U.S. Africa Command representatives who participated in the working group or submitted written comments for their productive contribution to the discussion.

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<sup>1</sup> The discussion at this meeting also considered the predicament of internally-displaced persons in addition to refugees. It is for this reason that there is a difference between the title of this report and the title of the discussion session on which this report is based.



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## SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

On February 6, 2007, U.S. President George W. Bush directed the establishment of a new Combatant Command focused on Africa. The announcement of U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) kindled a flurry of discussion amongst Africa watchers in Washington, DC and beyond. Debate largely centered on the implications of this announcement, the mission of the new Command, its location, and above all, how USAFRICOM actions would reconcile with those of other players in the region and whether the decision signified a militarization of U.S. policy in the region.

Irrespective of this debate, the establishment of the Command reflects several important changes in U.S. Government, particularly U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) perceptions about the importance of Africa to U.S. strategic interests. Previously, three geographic Combatant Commands (COCOMs) shared responsibility for Africa, a situation that sometimes resulted in fragmented action in the region. USAFRICOM's almost continent-wide responsibility allows the DoD to assume a comprehensive approach as it addresses security challenges on the continent, suggests an increasing recognition of the commonalities across African states and regions, and serves as an acknowledgement that many security concerns and obstacles, as well as their root causes and effects, transcend these physical boundaries. The Command's interagency component also suggests a greater recognition of the need for consistent coordination of U.S. activities to address these security challenges. The DoD is but one player in the region and must consistently work with other U.S. Government departments and agencies to support broader activities in the region when appropriate.

With this heightened interest and attention in mind, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's Advanced Systems and Concepts Office (DTRA/ASCO) initiated a fundamental research assessment of African security challenges – what they are today and what they might be over the horizon. This assessment could be used to inform future planning and research for ASCO, and inform those U.S. Government players active in the region, including, but not limited to the newest form of DoD engagement, USAFRICOM.

### Research Objective and Approach

It is important to note that the vision for this project at the outset was to study USAFRICOM's mission and structure and determine how these would affect the way that the Command addressed security challenges in the region. When it was determined that many conferences, workshops, and publications had already addressed this topic (coupled with the fact that the USAFRICOM mission and structure were still being refined as it stood up), the research team realized that a broader and more fundamental “challenges-centric” assessment was needed. Indeed, many players were rightly investigating the “nuts and bolts” of USAFRICOM and other U.S. engagement in the region (specifically how that might be affected by the stand-up of the new Command), yet few were conducting a comprehensive assessment of what security challenges those players might need to address today and in the

future. The research team felt an “over the horizon” aspect was especially important and an area in which our research could inform future strategic planning.

The research objective was to define the major categories of security challenges in Africa today and explore possibilities for what they might be over the horizon. Using fundamental insights from academic and research experts to develop a better understanding of those challenges, the research was intended to explore how the challenges intersect and identify their importance for U.S., especially USAFRICOM, activities and engagement on the continent. This research would provide a platform for further study of how the United States can address the identified challenges through various (and ideally coordinated) forms of engagement, including USAFRICOM.

To accomplish this objective, the research team performed academic literature and expert reviews to identify a large list of African security challenges with the recognition that there is some debate among experts on the challenge areas and their importance relative to one another. The team also surveyed U.S. Government strategic documents (including USAFRICOM mission and vision statements) to obtain a list of those challenges the government identifies as important. Eventually, this list was pared down to three broad categories of challenges and served as a foundation for an academic workshop at which the security challenges were discussed in October 2008.<sup>2</sup>

1. Transnational security issues
  - a. Small arms/light weapons
  - b. Maritime security
  - c. Disease
2. Internal and regional conflict
  - a. Border issues, spread of conflict, and peacekeeping
  - b. Humanitarian assistance, refugees, and internally-displaced persons
  - c. Rebels
  - d. Post-conflict reconstruction issues
3. Potential flashpoints/future security challenges
  - a. Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and R&D developments
  - b. Oil and natural resource competition and exploitation
  - c. Terrorism and radical Islam
  - d. China and other states

While the approach to the challenges selection was not scientific, the research team viewed this research project as a starting point and not an end point in the study. The workshop in October 2008 provided a foundation for more in-depth and specific discussions and research on major security challenges and their implications; it also pointed the research

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<sup>2</sup> The list was pared down for both practical and budgetary reasons. That is, the research team needed to conduct a one day workshop with academic experts and therefore tried to select challenges that could be discussed within that timeframe, but that would also allow for broad participation among many types of experts. It also selected challenges of particular interest to the sponsoring organization (DTRA/ASCO) and incorporated some challenges that might not be viewed as important today, but that could dramatically affect the security landscape tomorrow.

team to several issues involving government and academic debate. Additionally, it highlighted the need to consider various methodologies to discuss security challenges among these two groups to ensure effective discussion. Indeed, it was also widely understood that one study would not be enough to accurately and comprehensively capture the challenges that make up the African security environment.

After the October 2008 workshop, the research team selected four specific challenges, or in some cases combined ones, from the above challenge list to receive more in depth attention by way of working group discussions and analytic papers over the course of the next several months. Participants at these working group discussions would focus on the current and possible future nature of a specific challenge, for example, small arms and light weapons, and how it might intersect with others. They would also preliminarily consider the implications of this challenge for U.S. engagement on the continent. In particular, participants would focus on the dimensions of the challenge that might be manipulated and issues associated with that manipulation.

The topics selected for further study included: weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons, disease, and refugees and militancy.<sup>3</sup> In January 2010, the research team also selected two additional topics for further study: food security and conflict; and the challenges, issues, and approaches to improving African security through the use of non/less-than-lethal force (an admitted departure from previous areas of study). After the topical discussions, the research team would conduct additional activities to synthesize results to date, obtain additional inputs, and consider the “so what?” question for engagement on the continent in greater depth.

The report that follows outlines the results of the fourth working group discussion session that focused on refugees and militancy.<sup>4</sup> As such, this report should be viewed as one element of the research endeavor on African security challenges with complete results and findings still pending.

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<sup>3</sup> These topics were selected for several reasons. They were the subject of broad debate at the October 2008 workshop or similar events, of interest to the sponsoring organization, and/or lacked extensive study within the U.S. Department of Defense.

<sup>4</sup> Although the initial intent was to focus on refugees in particular in this discussion session, the need to consider the problem space with a broader analytic lens quickly emerged in the discussion. The participants opined that the unique predicaments of internally-displaced persons (IDPs) also need to be considered in the discussion. It is for this reason that the title of this report includes the term “internally-displaced persons” in addition to “refugees.”





## SECTION 2: WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION SESSION OBJECTIVES, SUCSESSES, AND DIFFICULTIES

### Objectives

DTRA/ASCO invited a small group of experts on the security dimensions of refugee challenges in Africa to participate in a working group discussion to better define the nature of the threat, the possible implications for U.S. engagement, and the ways in which the threat (if deemed important) could be addressed through activities on the continent. It is important to note that the starting point assumption was that there were security dimensions to the refugee challenge in Africa, though the workshop organizers acknowledged that security was not the only dimension of the challenge which must be considered when analyzing the issue and responding to it.

For purposes of the discussion, the workshop organizers planned to focus primarily on one element of the challenge: the intersection between refugee issues and militancy threats and concerns in Africa. At the outset of the discussion, all of the participants stressed the importance of distinguishing between refugees and internally-displaced persons (IDPs), both of which can comprise displaced populations. As such, the discussion focused on both of these types of displaced persons. The participants distinguished between them as appropriate within the discussion.

As the fourth in a series of working sessions on specific security challenges, this working session, like the others, had a secondary objective. Experiences at the October 2008 workshop suggested that there are some difficulties associated with conducting government and academic dialogue on security challenges. This was especially apparent when analyzing the different priorities and approaches of the two communities when assessing security challenges. One question that revealed the different priorities of the communities, for example, is the issue of whether to consider the root causes of the security challenge area or only their effects. Further, what are the implications of that decision for formulating and implementing policy and related activities in the challenge area? This working session served as one test case to refine ways to facilitate government and academic dialogue in such a way that can most effectively inform strategic planning and understanding while reflecting the analytic complexities of the study topics.<sup>5</sup>

### Working Group Discussion Structure

#### Participants

The core meeting participants were largely drawn from the academic sector. Four represented a non-military U.S or Canadian university. One represented a U.S. military education institution. The majority of the participants had a publishing record on the

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<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this topic, please see the first workshop report from this study, *African Security Challenges: Now and Over the Horizon*. A full copy of the report can be found at: <http://www.dtra.mil/asco/ascoweb/pdf/Africa%20Security.pdf>.

security dimensions of the refugee/IDP challenge in Africa and/or recent experience examining such issues on the ground in Africa through field research. Other participants were experts on African security challenges and U.S. engagement on them writ large or were pursuing in-depth graduate studies focused on refugee/IDP questions. Additional observers/moderators represented USAFRICOM and DTRA. In all cases, the participants shared the assumption that refugee/IDP challenges in Africa can/should be analyzed (though not solely) through a security lens if one is discussing militarization concerns.

### Agenda

The working group session was comprised of both presentations and plenary discussions. In advance of the meeting, the research team selected one participant, Dr. Sarah Kenyon Lischer from Wake Forest University, to develop a draft foundational paper which would consider the current and possible future security dimensions of the refugee/IDP challenge in Africa (focusing primarily on the intersection between refugee/IDP status and militancy) and serve as a catalyst for broader discussion. Lischer was asked to consider two major sets of questions in her paper and related presentation:

- What are the dimensions of the refugees/IDP and militancy challenges in Africa which might be considered within a security framework in particular? How do they intersect?
- What social, political, cultural, and economic root causes must be considered when addressing the linkages between refugee/IDP and militancy challenges and broader African security? What effects must be considered? How can an understanding of these causes and effects inform our understanding of the mutual impact this security challenge has on broader African security? Are there tradeoffs in focusing on causes and effects? Is there a way both can be considered in an analysis to inform decision-making and if so, how?

All participants received the draft paper in advance of the working group session. After Lischer presented her paper, the other participants provided specific comments on the paper to assist her in revising it. In addition, the participants discussed broader concepts found in the paper.

After the paper presentation, the participants contributed to a moderated discussion of the nature of the security challenge and other issues associated with its analysis. Finally, the workshop organizers held an additional moderated discussion on issues surrounding United States' and partnered security-focused engagement on refugee/IDP challenges in Africa. In particular, they asked the participants to consider the following questions:<sup>6</sup>

- How might African and U.S. perceptions of the challenge area, including differences between them, shape the way the challenge area is addressed over the long-term and the success and failure of this response?

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<sup>6</sup> Though the participants considered elements of several of these questions during the discussion period, the discussion that actually emerged did not specifically focus on all of these questions.

- Which security dimensions of the challenge area can be addressed through U.S. engagement over the long-term? How might security engagement intersect with other forms of engagement?
- What alternative pathways for engagement might be considered over the long-term? What issues should be discussed when determining the contribution of U.S. players? What role might the U.S. Africa Command have? What issues need to be considered when developing partnered engagement strategies (i.e. those involving non-government partners and other state governments)?

After the working session, the paper author was given an opportunity to refine her analyses based on the feedback that she received from the other participants and from her own impressions stemming from the day's discussions. The research team drafted this report to summarize the broader findings of the group.

### Meeting the Objectives: Difficulties and Successes

**Success:** The organizers were successful in convening a highly respected small group of experts who have analyzed the security dimensions of the refugee/IDP challenge in Africa and who could consider the nature of the threat and response options.

**Discussion:** The majority of the participating experts had extensive experience conducting highly-respected academic research efforts on various aspects of the problem in Africa. Most had focused this research on various aspects of the security dimensions of the problem. For example, one researcher was heavily focused on the experience of child soldiers and points of intersection with refugee/IDP and militancy concerns while another was concerned with the intersection between urbanization challenges and refugee/IDP and militancy challenges in the region. These varying focuses allowed for a fuller discussion of the points of intersection among many of the dimensions of the security challenge. Some of the academic experts had also conducted studies on the global dimension of the refugee/IDP problem. This allowed for a full discussion of the analytic complexities associated with studying these issues in any region, including Africa. This brought the discussion to a higher level.

With one major exception, the academic experts were not pursuing U.S. Government-sponsored research in this area or supporting related “on the ground” activities. As a result, they were not particularly experienced with considering the practicalities of U.S. Government engagement on this security challenge. The advantage of this unfamiliarity was that the discussion that emerged offered some fresh perspectives on response challenges which may not have otherwise been brought forth given a different pool of expert participants.

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**Difficulty #1:** Discussion of the issues surrounding U.S. and partner engagement on the security challenge was not as detailed as the discussion of the nature of the challenge.

**Discussion:** As noted previously, the group of experts selected to participate in this meeting were generally not very experienced with considering ways to practically respond to

the refugee/IDP challenge within a decision making/engagement framework. This, coupled with the fact that this element of the discussion occurred toward the end of the group session, resulted in a less detailed discussion of U.S. engagement issues and approaches. In future meetings, it may be helpful to include a short presentation from one or more U.S. Government representatives to ground a discussion on what is currently being done to address this challenge to serve as a catalyst for a discussion on what else could be done over the long-term and issues surrounding those alternatives. However, this added formality could result in a situation in which the academic/out of the box flavor of the discussion is overshadowed and/or minimized. There is a value to both kinds of discussions (those based in theory/academics and those based in “practical realities”) but there remains a question about how to integrate them and ensure that one does not overshadow the other.

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**Difficulty #2:** Future dimensions of the challenge and its possible evolution were not heavily discussed.

**Discussion:** The participants agreed that refugee/IDP challenges impacts and is impacted by the African security environment today. Given that there were many dimensions to today’s problems to discuss, the participants did not generally consider how they might change over the long-term and the various implications of those possible changes both to the nature of the problems and the capabilities needed to respond to them. A portion of the agenda dedicated to a focused discussion on future potentials might have proved valuable.

### SECTION 3: OVERALL THREADS OF DISCUSSION

The participants broadly agreed on the importance of analyzing those security issues which impact displaced populations in Africa including how they shape and are shaped by the broader African security environments in particular contexts. The militarization of these populations is but one security issue to examine in this context. It is regarded by some as an important one in shaping U.S. engagement in the African security environment, particularly because of its possible intersection with other security issues on the continent including: smuggling, conflict, and weak/poor governance and corruption. Although there are possible points of intersection between issues of militarization and terrorism in Africa over the long-term, over exaggeration and overemphasis of these linkages should be avoided. However, the participants asserted that the implications of this security problem can be observed along several dimensions including human security, regional security, and international security. A proper analysis of any particular instance of the problem, whether related to militarization or not, should include attention to all of these dimensions.

#### Analysis of Displaced Populations

The participants identified several analytic complexities associated with examining those security issues that are related to displaced populations around the world including, but not limited to, African ones. These complexities have broad implications for the way in which analysis can be conducted to support decision makers' understanding of the issues relevant to a particular instance of a problem, formulation of options for addressing the problem, and subsequent implementation of the selected engagement strategy. Within this context, the participants noted the potential value of case study research approaches in helping one to both understand specific instances of security problems involving a displaced population and identify general commonalities and differences among various cases to assist in lessons learned application to current crises. Although some participants surmised that decision makers are more apt to focus on the singular case currently demanding their attention, the potential value of comparative case study analysis to provide general insights on possible ways in which a given security situation might evolve and/or provide some predictive power on possible manifestations of the security issue in the future should not be discounted. However, in order for a case study to be useful in this context, it should not focus completely on the end-state of the situation being examined. The participants stressed that end-states are very much context-dependent.

Another analytic challenge relates to understanding the dynamics and relationships between the human security, regional security, and international security dimensions and effects of security problems involving displaced populations. The participants stressed that an analytic framework which incorporates all of these dimensions can help an analyst understand how local instances of security problems involving displaced populations may have broad implications for the nature of the larger security environment. However, a challenge is identifying where the feedback loops exist within these relationships. Just as it is important to understand the broader security implications of security problems involving displaced people, so too is it important to understand the particular context in which the problem emerged. The participants asserted that displaced populations are neither homogenous nor



static entities and therefore need to be disaggregated in any analysis. Whether a particular population is comprised of refugees or internally-displaced persons (IDPs) is not the only point of distinction; other characteristics, such as the population's location – in a camp or a non-camp environment, its economic status, and its political, religious, ideological, and ethnic affinities need to be examined as well. They further suggested that disaggregating these entities at the broader population level may not be sufficient to obtain a true understanding of them. In some cases, sub-sections of single displaced populations may present with different characteristics which in turn may shape the kinds and severity of security problems different entities at the sub-population level might face within a given context. Understanding those characteristics, including those that are most salient in shaping the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of the particular entity of interest is of crucial importance to developing appropriate solutions to the problems these people experience. A study of these influences (or confluence of influences) can also help an analyst understand the degree to which a certain population or sub-section of a population might be vulnerable to a certain influence – for example, militarization.

However, data on these populations (and sub-populations) are crucial to understand these dynamics. The experts stressed the importance of field research as one of the only means to collect data on specific refugee/IDP populations and therefore to better understand all aspects of the specific refugee/IDP situation of interest. However, the conduct of this field research to obtain the necessary data can be difficult, if not near impossible, in many instances in Africa due to challenges associated with accessing those populations which need to be studied. As a result, there is some reliance on partnerships with local academics within affected regions to collect data on certain refugee/IDP populations and provide it to those who can use the data for analysis. Though these local partnerships are beneficial to ensuring broader access to data, it should not be assumed that locals in every African region can gain access to the refugee/IDP population of interest to conduct the research. In some African contexts, local academics may also face access issues.

The participants underscored that understanding characteristics associated with displaced populations of interest is not sufficient to allow a decision maker to fully understand the security issues affecting populations of interest and the dynamics of their specific security situations. Understanding which security issues are at play in a given context and how and why these security situations developed is important to making engagement decisions to address security problems. Several analytic approaches may be leveraged to understand these relationships and dynamics, and causal analysis alone may not be sufficient to fully and accurately understand a given security situation.

### **The Militarization of Displaced Populations: The Armed Groups**

The participants, noting these analytic issues, then broadly considered the dimensions of one particular type of refugee/IDP security problems — the militarization of refugees/IDPs by armed groups. One participant broadly asserted that in Africa, the general form this problem takes today might be different than the form it took in the past. Citing the 1994 Rwanda case as a recent historical example of refugee/IDP militarization in Africa, she noted that today not all displaced groups are politically and militarily organized the way the Hutus were in 1994. Other participants noted some modern-day exceptions in places like Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This shift in political and military

organization has broad implications for the degree to which armed groups can successfully target and leverage particular refugee/IDP groups to advance their cause. Additionally, there is a higher number of IDPs in Africa today than in the past. IDPs are not located in centralized camps, and therefore are likely not afforded the same level of protection and needs provision as refugees, a fact which also has broad implications for their potential to become militarized and the way that they would be targeted for and initially engage in militant activities.

Although the participants generally agreed that militarization is not always a problem in every refugee/IDP population in Africa today, it is likely to remain a potential threat in Africa for the foreseeable future under certain conditions and circumstances. The participants articulated two dimensions that need to be studied. One is how armed groups might target refugees/IDPs to advance their cause. The other is the degree to which certain populations or segments of single populations might be vulnerable to such militarization. Although context matters in determining whether and how a certain group or population of refugees/IDPs at a certain point of time will become militarized, the experts suggested several ways to disaggregate these elements. The participants cautioned that the relationship between the armed group and the refugee/IDP population, and the ways in which the two engage, is complex and multi-dimensional.

One element that needs to be understood relates to those armed groups that prey on vulnerable refugee/IDP populations. Within a given context, one would need to know the nature of the armed group, its motivations for targeting the refugee/IDP population, and the ways it might target (and if successful) leverage the refugees/IDPs to advance its cause. The participants noted that the threats posed by the armed group may vary depending on the composition of the group and their *raison d'être*. For this reason, it may be necessary to further break down the armed group variable. For example, one might need to know if the group in question is a terrorist, insurgent, or militant one, or a combination of those things. Additionally, one would need to examine its motivation. In some cases, a single group may not be motivated by one factor to leverage refugees/IDPs to advance their cause. Multiple motivations may be at play in shaping a group's decisions in a particular context. The participants also recognized the complex and multi-dimensional ways in which armed groups target (and when successful, leverage) refugee/IDP populations to advance their cause in a given context. Sometimes many of these mechanisms are at play in a singular instance of targeting. Refugee/IDP populations, for example, could be used as resources, targets of violence, demographic pawns, for shield and sanctuary, or (in many cases) a combination of these things. Although targeting approaches an armed group can use to engage with a certain population can be coercive/involuntary or non-coercive/voluntary, these distinctions can be blurred in the African context, especially in situations of conflict. Armed groups can employ violence to ensure their action achieves the desired end state, but non-violent "recruitment" mechanisms can also be employed. These decisions and the ways they are executed are largely context-dependent.

### **The Militarization of Displaced Populations: The Targets**

Another dimension to consider when disaggregating specific situations of refugee/IDP militarization is the nature of the refugee/IDP population which is the target for militarization. The participants broadly asserted that no two refugee/IDP populations at any

given time in any location in Africa are completely alike. They discussed those factors which shape the degree to which and how a particular refugee/IDP population or sub-section of it might or will be vulnerable to militarization. In addition to identifying whether the affected population or sub-population is comprised of refugees or IDPs, the participants discussed several other factors which may be important to understand a certain refugee/IDP population's or sub-population's security situation – which in turn impacts the entity's potential vulnerability to militarization. These include: the reason for displacement; location, length of displacement, and access to the “outside world;” age/gender status; economic status; and ethnic, religious, ideological, and political affinities. No single factor can determine whether or not a population or sub-section of it will become militarized.

The experts observed that although militarized conflict is a major reason for displacement in Africa, it is not the only reason. Displacement can occur for a myriad of reasons (for example, a sudden change in economic opportunity or a natural disaster) and sometimes several factors might be at play in a single instance of displacement. Nonetheless, the reason(s) for a population's displacement may impact the degree to which a population is vulnerable to militarization. Further, the location of the population may matter in determining its vulnerability to militarization. For either political or practical reasons, some African refugee populations are located in camps, while others are interspersed within urban civilian populations. Though African camps are still a mainstay on the continent, the increased urbanization of refugee/IDP populations has broad implications for the levels of vulnerability and insecurity many refugee/IDP populations face. The uniqueness of the situations refugees in camps face as opposed to those refugees in urban areas face must be acknowledged as well as the notion that no two camps or urban areas are completely alike. Further, the level of entrenchment of a particular displaced population in the outside world may also be important in determining whether the population will be a target of militarization as well as the duration of its displacement.

The participants asserted that although age and gender alone are not determinants of whether refugees/IDPs will become militarized, there exist potential relationships between child soldiering/young recruitment into militaries, both of which are common in some African contexts, and the vulnerability of children and young men within refugee/IDP populations as targets to support militant actions. Likewise, although the participants in the discussion asserted that conflict is a driver of poverty and that refugees/IDPs in ongoing conflict situations are generally likely to be facing severe economic hardships, several of them cautioned against assuming all refugees/IDPs in Africa experience the same levels of poverty. As one expert observed, not all are afforded the same level of protection/provision of their basic needs. A precarious economic situation may be one factor in determining whether a displaced person or group makes a decision to engage in militant activity, whether out of desperation or opportunism. Finally, the participants noted a possible danger in assuming that all refugees/IDPs in Africa have ethnic, religious, ideological, and/or political affinities which would fundamentally motivate them to engage in militant action to support a cause. Additionally, it should not be assumed that all the refugees/IDPs in single population at a particular point in time have the same affinities or attach the same importance to those affinities in governing their actions. However, is not out of the realm of possibility that some of these affinities, or a combination of them, might shape refugee/IDP decisions to join an armed group and engage in illicit activities. The presence of conflict can impact the

degree to which these affinities become important to some individuals and groups that are displaced.

### **Engagement**

In addition to considering the nature of the refugee/IDP militancy problem in Africa, the participants also discussed a broad set of issues involved in U.S. and other engagement on the problem. They considered U.S. interests in addressing the challenge and the degree to which African governments, citizens, and other responders might perceive the challenge space differently. To bridge the gap between the discussion of the particular refugee/IDP and militarization challenge and engagement strategies, they also considered the degree to which decision makers should focus on root causes or effects of refugee/IDP militarization when formulating engagement strategies and the particular complexities decision makers face when refugee/IDP situations accompany conflict. Although the experts offered several dimensions of the problem which require more engagement, they did not generally discuss specific details (i.e. which entities and in what areas these entities might be best fit to engage in to address these problems). The participants did identify those dimensions of the challenge requiring further research.

More specifically, the experts suggested that the U.S. Government currently views the security dimensions of refugee/IDP challenges through a primarily terrorism-focused lens of analysis. Many participants agreed that there is a general concern that the militarization of these populations, in particular, will have broad implications for the terrorist threat in Africa. The participants observed that some African states seeking assistance with their refugee/IDP issues will (and possibly have) leverage(d) this interest and articulate their needs within this framework to attract more U.S. Government attention to the problem. However, given broader U.S. interests in African security issues, there is a potential for further engagement by the U.S. Government on refugee/IDP security problems in the region. Although the U.S. Africa Command is not currently focused on these problems, it is plausible to consider the Command's potential engagement role over the long-term not as a sole leader in providing protection to refugees/IDPs and attending to their related development needs, but as a collaborator and integrator to implement U.S. security engagement strategies in this area.

The participants also briefly discussed the fact that African governments might have different perceptions of the refugees/IDP and militancy challenges than the average African citizen and other external actors charged with addressing these challenges; however they collectively cautioned against assuming that there is a single shared African government view of the challenge, a single shared African citizen view of these issues, and a single shared view for all external actors. As one participant stressed, context matters, and the perceptions and interests of all actors involved in responding to (and/or are impacted by) a particular instance of the challenge need to be examined. Differences in these views and interests can have the potential to further destabilize already unstable security situations and need to be considered when formulating and implementing engagement strategies.

In addition to understanding differences in perception, the participants stressed the importance of decision makers understanding the root causes of the security situations on which they need to engage that involve displaced populations. Although root cause analysis

should not be the sole focus of analysis in a decision making context and decision makers should focus more on end-states/effects, root causes do need to be examined to understand why the problem has emerged in the way it has. This kind of deep knowledge is essential in formulating solutions appropriate to the problem at hand. Likewise, the relationship between the refugees/IDPs and their security situations need to be understood for any given manifestation of refugee/IDP militarization. It should not be assumed that the refugees/IDPs should always be considered the dependent or independent variable in any given analysis.

In situations where refugee/IDP issues accompany ongoing conflict, this analysis is further complicated. The particular stage of conflict at play may impact the way in which this analysis is conducted. Likewise, the stage of conflict also influences how a decision maker should prioritize its actions to address refugee/IDP security problems and more fundamentally, which element of the problem should receive the most attention. This prioritization has broad implications for the types of tools that will be considered for use in addressing a problem and the types of solutions that will be sought.

Finally, the participants observed that although many players in the international arena are currently engaging on refugee/IDP security problems in Africa, several dimensions of the refugee/IDP and militancy problem in particular require further engagement. These include managing security within African refugee camps, facilitating information flow and exchanges, providing development assistance, and managing the repatriation of refugees post-conflict. In general, there was little discussion of the ways in which specific actors might support these endeavors, though the participants broadly asserted the need for collaboration. They concluded by noting that further research, both on particular instances of refugee/IDP militarization in Africa and on macro trends that might emerge over the long-term, is needed to help decision makers charged with engagement over the long-term better understand how this problem manifests itself today in Africa and how it is likely to manifest itself in the future. To this end, the experts stressed the importance of field work to underpin these research activities to ensure their utility in enhancing an understanding of the problem.



### A Note on the Organization of the Summaries

As stated previously, Sarah Lischer presented a draft paper to ground the broader discussion at the meeting. The paper in its final form is available in the appendix of this report. As many of the issues raised in her paper and the discussion of it served as seamless catalysts for broader and interwoven discussion of the issues among all of the meeting participants, the authors of this report have chose to incorporate these prepared insights into the broader summaries of the discussion, which is organized topically, rather than present a standalone summary of the presentation in and of itself.

Additionally, though these summaries do not reference the specific recommendations from the participants on how the author of the foundational paper could improve her paper, they do address all issues that were considered in the meeting. In a majority of cases, the discussion points are not presented in chronological order as participants jumped from topic to topic. For ease of reading, topical organization is the rule rather than the exception.



## **SECTION 4: DISCUSSION SUMMARY – ANALYTIC ISSUES AND APPROACHES**

Although the discussion was mostly centered on understanding the nature of refugee/IDP security challenges in African contexts, focusing on militancy issues in particular, the participants also discussed analytic issues associated with examining refugee/IDP security challenges more generally. The participants determined that research in this area, whether focused on Africa or some other region, while important, is fraught with some difficulties. Researchers, for example, need to consider the way to approach studies of specific refugee/IDP populations. Comparative case studies are useful ways to conduct this research and analysis, but there are decisions that need to be made on how many individual cases to study and how insights from these studies can be used to support understanding of a specific situation, and in some cases, decisions about ways to respond to problems. Other issues include defining analytic frameworks to ground the study of specific refugee/IDP populations, accounting for contextual information specific to the refugee/IDP population being studied and having access to data which provide this context, and determining ways to represent and account for relationships between variables to understand the refugee/IDP and security dynamics at play in a given situation.

The participants focused on identifying these analytic issues and the implications for the conduct of research in this area. Though no solutions were identified (although some approaches to consider were offered), the participants agreed on the importance of these issues and the need to discuss them. They asserted these issues have great implications not only for how studies of refugees/IDPs and security are conducted, but also for how those studies can be used to support the decision maker in determining engagement strategies to address refugee/IDP security issues both generally and in specific contexts.

### **Conducting and Using Case Study Research**

The participants agreed that case study analytic approaches are generally used to study specific instances of refugee/IDP security challenges in Africa or elsewhere. It was acknowledged that the two broad communities concerned with these challenges – decision makers and academic researchers – potentially have two different views on and uses for case studies, though they may agree on the importance of understanding specific instances of a challenge within a particular context or case. As one expert observed, decision makers may only be concerned with the particulars of one case at a time – the one that requires their attention at any given moment. Academic researchers, on the other hand, largely examine several cases to study this challenge area and use these cases to conduct a comparative analysis. As another expert observed, the latter approach can help the researcher avoid reinventing theories about the security challenge being studied. As another expert suggested, comparative case study analyses can be used to identify patterns among cases, including the differences and commonalities.<sup>7</sup> However, the selection of which cases to study matters in

determining the kinds of insights the analysis could potentially provide. Cases should be selected on the basis of what it is the researcher is trying to understand.

Though both the potential and actual value of comparative case study approaches for academic research was not questioned, there was some discussion as to whether or not a comparative approach to case study analysis was a “nice to have” or a necessity to inform decision making on particular situations in real world contexts. One participant argued strongly that a comparative approach was not only a good approach to analyzing instances of refugee security challenges in an academic context, but it was also necessary to support decision making on particular cases in real world environments. She emphasized that comparative case studies may offer some predictive power; they can help an analyst identify and understand the circumstances under which such security challenges might emerge in the future – whether in the specific context being analyzed, or a similar one. Further, decision makers need to know how the challenge they are concerned with at the moment has manifested itself in the past to identify implications of those instances for the present day.

To clarify her argument, she brought the discussion back toward the particular focus of the working group discussion session. Refugee populations “in exile” may be a rarity today in Africa, but a decision maker may still be able to use lessons learned from the past in formulating decisions about today’s situation(s) of interest if the decision maker does not simply focus on the end-states associated with a particular case or set of cases.<sup>8</sup> Another expert took this suggestion further and noted that a study of multiple cases could help a decision maker most if the study focuses on identifying important trends about instances of a security challenge. This kind of focus would assist analysts in decision making environments to consider implications of various engagement strategies.

### **Defining an Analytic Security Framework**

Lischer noted in her presentation that a discussion of the implications of particular instances of refugee/IDP security problems may transcend several different levels of analysis, which include human security, regional security, and international security. To this end, she offered an analytic framework which encompasses all of these levels to allow for a fuller understanding of the dimensions of the problem requiring study including their points of intersection with one another. This approach is particularly useful when studying situations where refugee/IDP security problems emerge in conflict situations. She cited that human security analysis focuses on the protection of individual within a conflict context. This analysis of human security challenges usually focuses at a local level, but the implications of the human insecurity at a local level can have a spill-over effect at a regional level, which in turn, can have spill-over effects at an international or global level. In this way, the destabilization of human security, which is often a major strategic objective in African conflicts, should not be viewed as a peripheral concern to protecting and advancing

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<sup>8</sup> Another participant echoed this point and suggested further that global transformative factors have impacted the way security situations evolve in specific cases today. Citing the mobile phone era and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks as two examples, she noted that analysts need to be aware of analytic difficulties associated with predictions based on comparisons of modern era cases with historical cases that occurred before the beginning of the eras ushered in by cell phone advancement and the 2001 terrorist events. Within this context, she cited Afghanistan and Iraq as being two key refugee/IDP cases that analysts could use for this kind of study in the future.

regional/international security objectives. Human security is then a central dimension to the refugee/IDP challenge space.<sup>9</sup>

The participants broadly agreed that employing such an analytic framework, particularly when drawn on case study analyses, is both useful and necessary to consider all dimensions of a refugee/IDP security challenge. As one expert suggested, this framework can be used to determine the implications associated with the various issues that are relevant to the challenge and it can assist the analyst in identifying explanatory mechanisms at play within a given refugee/IDP and security relationship, both of which are required by decision makers to formulate decisions regarding response to security situations involving refugees/IDPs. However, in order for such a framework to be useful in studying a specific instance of a security challenge and developing ways to address it, the specific issues and questions at play for that situation need to be identified.

Though the idea of a framework/typology analytic approach resonated with the discussants, a few participants noted some difficulties with the specific framework that Lischer offered. Several cited practical difficulties in distinguishing between the various levels of analysis that Lischer offered, particularly understanding how to determine that which is “regional” from that which is “international.” One participant noted that differentiating between the two is more challenging when the target of the analysis is a refugee/IDP population located near state borders. One participant noted “sub-regional” may be a better analytic dimension label than “regional.” Another suggested that “regionally-focused” analysis might focus on conflict within or originating from a home country while “internationally-focused” analysis might focus on conflict within the country hosting the refugee population or conflict resulting from wars or terrorism.

Within the context of this discussion, Lischer noted a point of distinction between that which is “regional” and that which is “international.” Analysis at the international level usually focuses on the impact of the challenge as it relates to the protection and/or attainment of national security interests. A discussion of refugee issues in this context would likely focus on such things as porous borders (such as the border between Chad and Sudan), points of intersection with terrorism, and the use of ungoverned or under-governed areas in which displaced populations reside as sanctuaries for illicit activities, such as the transfer of weapons. A broad challenge, as one participant pointed out, is articulating the analytic and causal links between the three dimensions of security in a particular environment, diagramming those relationships, noting where the feedback loops are, and determining the implications of those linkages for decision making response to security issues involving refugees/IDPs.

### **Accounting for Population Differences and Other Contextual Factors**

The participants underscored that the analysis of any refugee/IDP security challenge needs to consider those contextual factors which are relevant to the specific situation being

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<sup>9</sup> However, it must be understood, as one expert suggested, the way in which an analyst defines “human security” will have an impact on the way in which this dimension is analyzed. She suggested that many definitions exist and there may be a difference in the U.S. Government definition and the definition used by some academic and non-government entities.



analyzed. This idea resonated with all of the participants in this discussion group because they all agreed that it was impossible to develop solutions to these security challenges that would be successful in addressing all instances of the challenge. What works in addressing one situation may not work in addressing other situations. Therefore, the experts emphasized the need for data collection and analysis on specific security situations to inform decision maker understanding of these contextual matters.

Overall, the participants cautioned that in all instances, refugees/IDPs should not be treated as a single, static, and homogenized entity.<sup>10</sup> Just as there are broad differences between the unique circumstances of refugee populations and IDP ones, there are also differences between various refugee populations and various IDP populations and sub-sections of those populations. Therefore, any analyst should disaggregate the specific population or sub-section of it which is the focus of the decision maker's attention and try to account for dynamic changes within that population or segment of the population. However, determining and articulating this contextual information about a specific population or a sub-section of it can be easier said than done. As one expert mentioned, the characterization of these entities to support these kinds of engagement decisions is both challenging and subjective. The characterization may be dependent on how the population or segment of it is perceived by those charged with "responding" to the challenge in cases where such an analysis is intended to inform an engagement decision.

The participants offered two ways to ensure analyses intended to support engagement decisions account for contextual factors associated with the situation being analyzed. One way to conduct this kind of contextual analysis, as one participant offered, is to focus on the relationship between the causes of threats/crises involving the specific displaced population and possible solutions to them. Though she cautioned against focusing solely on causes and ignoring end-states, she advocated for studying causes to understand why situations are the way they are. For example, decision makers may need to account for why the population in question was displaced in the first place and whether the displacement was a by-product of some other challenge in order to develop suitable responses to the situation. This kind of contextual information is not only necessary to develop responses, but also to help decision makers determine the level of compromise that actors engaging on the challenge should consider making. Another participant offered that conducting a stakeholders analysis is a best practice. However, conducting this kind of analysis well requires on the ground knowledge to identify actors, relationships between them, and institutions involved at each level of engagement (local, state, regional, and international).

The participants agreed that articulating contextual factors is not enough to inform decision making about how to engage on a particular situation. Decision makers also need to know the relative importance of a given contextual factor to the particular instance of the challenge they need to address. Some factors may be more salient in one situation at a given point in time than another. Though an understanding of that which is unique about one situation is needed to develop solutions, it also may be important to understand those factors which are important in all cases in formulating approaches to deal with the challenges.

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<sup>10</sup> Throughout the discussion, the participants highlighted the kinds of contextual information which is needed to understand a specific displaced population which is faced with militarization issues specifically. These details will be discussed further in the next section of this report.

### **Data Access**

Throughout the discussion, the importance of on the ground data to inform a decision maker's contextual understanding about a security situation was highlighted. The participants discussed the potential difficulty for experts to obtain appropriate access to conduct field research within refugee/IDP populations and collect the kind of data which are needed for a complete analysis of the situation. In some cases, as one expert observed, it may be even more difficult to gain access to do field research within IDP populations than refugee ones; perhaps because of that, she cited the need for more IDP-focused field research in Africa.

Given these access difficulties, one participant opined that many researchers and analysts may need to rely on local academics in the affected area for access to data on the local IDP/refugee populations of interest. Today, the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University maintains a consortium of schools and individual academic researchers who participate in refugee/IDP-focused field research projects and fact-finding missions which may be used to support developing linkages between those who have data and those who can use them. It should not be assumed, however, that even the local research community always has access to data about a certain security situation involving refugees/IDPs. Nonetheless, there are also a number of academics in Africa who are focused on gathering information about forced migration situations in the region writ large from the ground up who also can serve as valuable resources to understand these contextual factors and related population dynamics.<sup>11</sup>

Aid workers on the ground can also provide information to researchers and analysts but there is a capacity issue in asking those individuals to collect "data" in an academic sense. Many times these workers do not have the tools and resources to gather data that are needed. Usually they can provide anecdotes, which may be useful to further understand the kinds of things which are happening on the ground, but anecdotes should not be the sole source of information to support decision making on a security challenge. Anecdotes are not usually the result of serious on the ground research about a specific security situation and the form they take may be affected by the views and specific perspectives of the individual and the organization for which that individual works. The anecdotes may be used by the NGO community, for example, to support advocacy goals. Therefore, while they may be useful to support a specific viewpoint on a security issue, they may not provide a full understanding of all of the dimensions of a specific instance of a security challenge involving refugees/IDPs.

It should be noted, however, that data access issues may not always be related to capacity. In some cases it may be difficult for inclined researchers to conduct field studies focusing on militarization issues within a refugee/IDP camp for more politically-based reasons. As one expert observed, some international humanitarian organizations may respond negatively to suggestions and/or plans for doing such research on refugee militarization within a camp or set of camps which they oversee. They may deny that such a phenomenon exists in their

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<sup>11</sup> One participant identified Loren Landau at Wits University in Johannesburg, South Africa as an example of an academic doing such "ground-up" research.

area of responsibility and/or avoid acknowledging that the militarization of the camp residents or segments of it is an existing or potential issue within the camp. That said, the difficulty of identifying those individuals who are conventional combatants (let alone those affiliated with terrorist groups) in camps in general should also not be minimized.

### **Identifying Relationships between Variables**

Throughout the discussion, the participants highlighted a number of issues associated with identifying and analyzing relationships between refugees/IDPs and security. The participants, first and foremost, cautioned against confusing correlation with causation, especially when using information about the relationships between these two variables to make decisions about how to respond to refugee/IDP security challenges, including those involving the militarization of a certain population or sub-section of it. Various analytic approaches, including but not limited to those focusing on causal chains, should be used in conjunction with one another to understand those security relationships at play within a given situational context. There was broad agreement that the analysis of a case using multiple different approaches would allow for a more complete analysis of a situation within a specific context as some approaches may be useful to provide insights in one area while other approaches are more useful in others. Many participants noted that using more than one analytic approach was especially important when assessing challenges in decision making environments when the decision maker needs the most complete analysis of the particular challenge available to formulate engagement strategies and options.

The participants underscored that simple causal chain analysis may not be sufficient to completely understand a specific refugee/IDP security situation. They suggested that analysts should not only rely on causal chain-focused analytic approaches to conduct studies of specific refugee/IDP security situations because, as one expert noted, the relationships between refugees/IDPs and the dynamics of the security situations they face are complex and cannot be simplified into cause and effect. There are different types of causal relationships at play in any situation – some are at the root level and some are not. Further, it can be difficult to ascertain and distinguish what is a cause and what is an effect of a specific security situation involving refugees/IDPs. It is possible that those analyses that explicitly identify specific cause/effect relationships are less grounded in the realities of a security situation. Focusing only on the causes and effects of a security situation may result in a vicious analytic circle because although similar causes and effects can be at play in multiple contexts, the way they manifest themselves are very context dependent.

However, as one participant noted, analysts should be careful not to assume that causal chains offer no explanatory power in case study analyses. She cautioned against discarding causal chains because they, though linear in nature, can provide a useful schematic to assist the analyst in determining the origin of a threat in a given situation. This suggestion was not met with any disagreement from the other participants and the participants proceeded to discuss other analytic approaches which could be used in conjunction with causal chain analyses. For example, one discussant suggested that the identification and analysis of cycles might prove useful as it allows the analyst to identify different break-in areas or access points to address a given instance of a security challenge. In some cases with causal chains, there may not be an “effect” to identify, but that should not always suggest a challenge does not exist. Within this context, she cited process tracing as being useful for identifying small links

within a larger cycle and/or picture.<sup>12</sup> However, as another participant observed, this approach, along with the identification of causal mechanisms, may not be as useful if there are insufficient data on the situation being analyzed. However, when data are available and multiple cases studies are used to generate comparative insights applicable to the study of a specific security situation, they can be especially useful to understand commonalities and differences associated with the security relationships at play across the cases.

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<sup>12</sup> The general method of process tracing is to generate and analyze data on the causal mechanisms, or processes, or events, actions, expectations, and other intervening variables that link causes to observed effects.



## SECTION 5: DISCUSSION SUMMARY – DIMENSIONS OF THE CHALLENGE

### The Details: Definition of the Challenge

The participants contended that the model for refugee militarization has undergone a broad shift in Africa and a concerted effort must be made to understand what that shift is, why it took place, and the implications of the shift for formulating effective strategies to address specific instances of refugee/IDP militarization in Africa today. Changes in the political-military organization of refugee/IDP populations along with a rise in the number of IDPs and situations where displaced populations exist outside of camps suggest further research is needed to determine the right analytic approach to examine instances of this challenge in modern-day Africa both at a general and case-specific level.

In her framing paper, Lischer argued that, in the African context, the template for thinking about security threats to displaced populations from armed groups has undergone a shift. Citing the 1994 Rwandan refugee crisis as being the major mental template for most discussions of refugee militarization, she contended this template is no longer most useful in understanding the current possible dimensions of the refugee and militancy challenge in Africa. Lischer argued that this is largely because most of the refugee groups (especially in camps) lack the level of political-military organization that was present within the Hutu refugee community in the camps in Zaire. The Hutu refugee community was largely comprised of “refugee warriors.” In this context, militants infiltrated these camps in mass numbers and stole food aid and used the camps as bases from which to launch cross border attacks.

Within this discussion, one participant noted a few exceptions in today’s African security landscape that suggest that political-military organization within displaced communities does still occur at some level.<sup>13</sup> Citing Sudan (Darfur) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo as examples, she reminded the group that some local armed resistance movements at play within these crises grew out of populations which are now displaced. Additionally, given the widespread governance challenges in Africa, with many governments focusing more on monopolizing power and resources and less on establishing rule of law and power sharing arrangements, it is probable that some segments of the impacted refugee/IDP populations will be sensitized to these possible sources of instability for the foreseeable future, making them more vulnerable to militarization to provide for their own security.

In her paper, Lischer identified another reason for the necessary analytic shift – the high number of IDPs in the African region today. Therefore, the situations of both

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<sup>13</sup> Within this context, the participants also offered several historical examples of refugee mobilization in Africa beyond the Rwandan case. These examples suggest that a broader look at mobilization practices is needed. For instance, many past refugee groups in Africa were groups struggling for independence, a desire which preceded their refugee status. These included the African National Congress (South Africa) the guerrillas who struggled against Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and the South West People’s Organization (Namibia). It is therefore necessary, one participant contended, to not assume the political-military organization of refugees is necessarily a negative security development. Likewise, those refugees labeled as “militants” are not always perceived as “bad guys” by every external actor charged with addressing refugee and related security issues. Perceptions matter. They can vary based on context.



refugee/IDPs need to be examined. The case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo demonstrates that IDPs also face security threats and their security situations have regional security implications for Africa. Therefore, analyses of the security of displaced populations in Africa need to account for the situations IDPs face at both a general and specific level. For example, the lack of an existing international legal framework to protect IDPs (as is in place for refugees) may mean that efforts to provide for their basic needs and protect them from armed groups will need to take another form from that which may be considered to deal with refugee insecurity. IDPs, for example, do not currently have the option to live in camps. However, as is the case with refugee-focused analyses, it should not be assumed that all IDPs in all contexts in Africa face the same security situations. Context matters when understanding particular situations and identifying ways to address them.

Beyond distinguishing between the unique situations IDPs/refugees face, another participant suggested that analysts should also consider how the location of refugees/IDPs has shifted. Noting that a good portion of African refugees/IDPs live in areas other than camps, she suggested that analyses of the challenge should also focus on the security situations refugees/IDPs face when they are interspersed within civilian populations, particularly in urban areas. This has great implications for determining possible strategies to provide for their security in a given situation—both in terms of basic needs provision and protection from armed groups.

### **The Details: Disaggregating the Involved Actors in African Contexts**

The expert participants agreed that the challenge of refugee/IDP militancy/militarization in Africa is both multi-dimensional and complex. Some of the reasons for this include the variance between the armed groups that target some refugee/IDP populations to support their militant activities, the kinds of factors which influence how the groups engage the refugee/IDP populations, and the variance among refugee/IDP populations that are the armed groups' targets. The discussion demonstrated that no single variable can account for whether or not a certain armed group will target a certain grouping of refugees/IDPs, how they will target them, and/or for what purpose. In most cases, a confluence of factors is at play – some of which are particular to a certain time and space – in determining the interaction between all of these elements and how they shape a given situation.

Likewise, the discussants emphasized that not every displaced person is or will be a target for militarization in Africa and/or become militarized, though militarization is an ongoing challenge in many African contexts. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors which may be important in determining which populations, or sub-sections of them, are the most vulnerable targets for militarization and have the potential to become engaged in militant activity. This analysis needs to be context and situation-based in order to provide potential insights to an analyst.

### **Disaggregating Armed Groups: Those Who Threaten**

The experts discussed three elements which may be important to understanding the armed groups that prey on vulnerable refugee/IDP populations including: the nature of the armed group, its motivations for targeting the refugee/IDP population, and the ways it might target and (if successful) leverage the refugees/IDPs to advance its cause. Although context

matters in determining these dynamics, the experts suggested several general ways to disaggregate these elements.

### **Nature of the Armed Group**

As one participant suggested, the threats posed by the armed group may vary depending on the composition of the group and its *raison d'être*. For this reason, it may be necessary to further break down the armed group variable. At a fundamental level an analyst would need to know, as one participant suggested, whether the group in question was a militant group, an insurgent group, or a terrorist group.<sup>14</sup> Though these categorizations are fluid and there may be some overlap, the expert offered that they might be helpful in discerning possible relationships between variables at play in a given situation. Although this categorization process was not discussed further, the participants highlighted the importance of considering these and perhaps other distinctions between armed groups to understand particular situations of refugee/IDP militarization.

### **Armed Group Motivations**

The particular motivation an armed group has for threatening refugee/IDP populations and/or engaging them to advance a cause also needs to be considered when studying any manifestation of a refugee/IDP militarization challenge. In her paper, Lischer noted that these motivational factors can vary from group to group and context to context and stressed that there may be multi-dimensional motivations framing armed group action even in a single case. For example, at a surface level, one armed group may target a refugee/IDP population to prevent them from returning to their homes after a conflict. However, the “deeper” rationale for this targeting could be a result of some combination of economic, emotional, or physical factors.

### **Ways to Target/Leverage Refugee/IDP Populations to Advance a Cause**

The participants also recognized the complex and multi-dimensional ways in which armed groups target (and when successful, leverage) refugee/IDP populations to advance their causes in a given context. In some cases, many of these mechanisms are at play in a singular instance of targeting. This discussion was largely derived from Sarah Lischer’s paper.<sup>15</sup> Lischer suggested that refugee/IDP populations could be used as resources, targets of violence, demographic pawns, for shield and sanctuary, or (in many cases) a combination of these things. She suggested individual refugees could be targeted through both coercive/involuntary and non-coercive/voluntary means but cautioned that these distinctions are often blurred in the African context – particularly in conflict situations. Armed groups can employ violence to ensure their action achieves the desired end state, but non-violent “recruitment” mechanisms can also be employed. These decisions and the ways they are executed are largely context-dependent.

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<sup>14</sup> For a further discussion on the ways in which one can distinguish between armed groups, one participant recommended examining the work that Richard Schultz (Tufts University) has done in this area.

<sup>15</sup> Further discussion of Lischer’s perspective on this issue can be found on pages 9 to 11 of her paper, “Forced Displacement and Security Challenges in Africa” in the appendix of this report.

## Resources

In her paper, Lischer emphasized that an armed group can use refugee/IDP populations for manpower to support its activities and/or to support the group's economic needs. Another expert noted the potential for these populations to provide other logistical support to an armed group to advance a cause.

There are several dimensions to consider when analyzing how armed groups might use refugees/IDPs for manpower. As one participant suggested, refugees, especially those in camps, can serve as “bodies” to directly execute desired actions because many potential recruits are available in a single location.<sup>16</sup> This includes, but is not limited to, soldiering. In some cases, armed groups may abduct children/young men to provide manpower to execute an action. However, several participants noted the potential blurring of the lines between voluntary/involuntary recruitment – especially in situations where a conflict, whether intrastate or interstate, is ongoing. One participant described the experience of some young Somali men in Kenyan refugee camps, an anecdote which serves to demonstrate this blurring of the lines and the way in which an armed group may use the existence of a conflict to manipulate certain groups of refugees (and in some cases IDPs) to join armed groups.<sup>17</sup> In the Kenyan case, Human Rights Watch has published reports which suggest Kenyan military members are manipulating and taking young Somali men from the Dadaab camps to help them fight against the Islamists in Somalia. Members of the Kenyan military may persuade these young men to join their ranks and fight in Somalia as a way to escape their current situation of having to live in a camp as a refugee and as a means to return home to Somalia.<sup>18</sup>

One participant reminded the group that the recruitment threats to refugee/IDP children do not end after their initial recruitment and (hopefully) eventual demobilization. Armed groups may re-recruit demobilized child soldiers to support their cause. Cellular phones can be used to facilitate a commander's access to these children who have been given a chance to re-enter mainstream society. In some African contexts, as this participant observed, commanders may contact these demobilized children on a monthly basis to check on them. This practice, when combined with other factors associated with existence in mainstream

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<sup>16</sup> As part of this discussion, one expert observed that in cases of mass displacement in Africa - a phenomenon which precedes the creation of camps, those armed groups may need to go to camps to obtain recruits because vast parts of African countries impacted by a natural disaster or conflict may be depopulated. The small size of many African countries is significant in determining the changes in demographic landscapes in conflict zones or areas impacted by natural disaster. Recruitment can be made harder to accomplish in small states if a given area is depopulated.

<sup>17</sup> For further information on this issue, please see: “Kenya Recruits Somali Refugees to Fight Islamists Back Home in Somalia,” Huffington Post, November 10, 2009 (<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/11/16/kenya-recruits-somali-refugees-fight-islamists-back-home-somalia>); and “From Horror to Hopelessness: Kenya's Forgotten Somali Refugee Crisis,” Human Rights Watch, March 29, 2009 (<http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2009/03/29/horror-hopelessness>).

<sup>18</sup> As part of this discussion, one participant suggested that a general discussion of the implications of Western countries training African militaries, some of which may operate with militant IDP/refugee recruits, may be needed. One question to discuss is whether engaging with these militaries may make them more efficient at recruiting refugees and IDPs. Another relates to whether these recruitment practices will have a broad transformative effect on African militaries in the long-term.

society – including economic survival-based ones, can result in the re-recruitment of some children.

The possibility of armed groups using refugees/IDPs for economic support also exists. As Lischer noted in her paper, this can involve theft and/or other forms of manipulation to obtain economic resources. As part of this discussion, one participant noted the emergence of mobile banking as a global phenomenon which may impact the way armed groups can use refugees/IDPs for economic support over the long-term in Africa specifically. Mobile banking is emerging in Africa; it is currently most prevalent in Kenya and Uganda, but it is spreading throughout the rest of the continent. The participant noted that although the emergence of mobile banking is not necessarily a negative transformative factor for facilitating militant actions among refugees/IDPs at the macro level, it does provide those with access to it with opportunities to carry out both “good” and “bad” economic activities. With mobile banking, even the most remote communities have the potential to be vastly connected to other areas economically, which can facilitate quick transactions to support militant action even in cases of geographic distance.

Another way in which armed groups can use refugees/IDPs to support their causes is logistics-related. These populations, many of whom have access to communicative technologies (including cellular phones) can provide links to build transnational networks (including those involving diaspora communities) necessary to execute illicit activity. One participant stated that generally refugees/IDPs in urban (non-camp) areas may be the best targets for this kind of support due to their level of mobility to act. However, it should not be assumed that every refugee/IDP in an urban area has the same level of access to technology which may be necessary to form these networks. The degree to which the refugees/IDPs are able to provide this support may also be dependent on the degree to which they are mobilized.

### Targets of Violence

Lischer also noted in her paper that armed groups may target refugees/IDPs through direct attacks (abduction, for example) or indirect violent attacks, which can take many forms.<sup>19</sup> Within the context of this discussion, one participant mentioned an example of how an armed group can launch an indirect violent attack on a refugee population. In Darfur, aid convoys en route to provide assistance to refugee groups are often targets for violence; some argue that, because of the aid flowing to the region and the associated potential illicit economic gain from that aid, organized criminal activities have escalated and the existing conflict has been driven to a higher level. In this and other cases, groups of refugees may not be receiving the assistance intended for them because the aid convoys’ access to the population is interrupted. Instead, armed groups that intercept the delivery or their contacts may be receiving the aid. It is possible some armed groups could leverage this “aid access” to recruit refugees into their armed groups. This expert asserted that humanitarian assistance agencies are becoming increasingly attuned to this occurrence, but it is an emerging African and global phenomenon that needs further study and attention.

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<sup>19</sup> One participant noted that understanding the type of violence that the armed group employs is crucial especially when considering the problem within an engagement/response framework. Different forms of violence may require different solutions.

### Demographic Pawns

Armed groups, as Lischer noted in her paper, can also use refugee/IDP groups to create “facts on the ground” to support a cause such as territorial expansion or ethnic cleansing. Another way refugees/IDPs can serve as an armed group’s demographic pawns is to use them in propaganda statements. They might use the mere presence of refugees/IDPs to exacerbate existing political tensions within a state or region and demonstrate a lack of government capacity to maintain law and order.

### Shield/Sanctuary

Lischer suggested in her paper that armed groups may also position themselves amongst large groups of refugees/IDPs for shield/sanctuary, both to hide from those seeking to disrupt their actions and to more easily target the displaced to join their causes. These armed groups can include terrorist groups such as those affiliated with the al Qaeda movement, but this is not always the case. As one expert noted, this is a more plausible situation in urban areas where refugee/IDP populations reside than in camps. Another expert agreed and noted the potential of under-governed or ungoverned spaces within a given state to be particularly good areas for shielding/sanctuary of armed groups.

### **Disaggregating Refugee/IDP Populations: The Threatened**

Building on the disaggregation theme, the participants broadly asserted that no two refugee/IDP populations at any given time in any location in Africa are completely alike. To this end, they discussed those factors which shape the degree to which and how a particular refugee/IDP population will be vulnerable to militarization. They further suggested that even at the population level, homogeneity cannot be guaranteed; in some cases, analysts will need to disaggregate at the sub-population level to determine those factors that influence a particular security situation. In addition to identifying whether the affected population is comprised of refugees or IDPs (because they are afforded different levels of protection through international legal frameworks), the participants discussed several other factors which may be important to determining and understanding a certain refugee/IDP population’s or sub-population’s security situation and its potential to become militarized. These include:

- the reason for displacement;
- location, length of displacement, and access to “outside world”;
- age/gender status;
- economic status; and
- ethnic, religious, ideological, and political affinities.

Recognizing these particularities is the first step to understanding the situation at hand and developing solutions which address the particular circumstances and issues that the impacted population faces. However, as noted previously, recognizing these factors is not enough. A determination of the relative importance and salience of the factor in shaping the situation is also important to determining responses to challenges and assessing the degree to which the

responses might be effective. In all cases, the complex interaction of two or more of these factors in shaping the security dynamic cannot be underestimated and should not be ignored. Rarely is one factor a major determinant of whether or not a certain displaced population or segment of it will become vulnerable to militarization. However, this contextual analysis can provide foundational insights to understand particular refugee/IDP populations and the nature of security predicaments they face and to develop ways to respond to them.

### **Reason for Displacement**

Although the participants acknowledged that militarized armed conflict can be one major direct reason for population displacement in Africa today, they emphasized that it is not the only reason that a refugee/IDP population might have initially been displaced. A broader analytic lens is needed to account for all possible reasons for population displacement in Africa.<sup>20</sup> In some cases, there may not be one single reason for displacement but rather several reasons. The reason for initial displacement may have some impact on the specific security situation a refugee/IDP population faces and the degree to which it is vulnerable to militant recruitment.

Several participants noted that initial displacement can be a by-product of some other event or circumstance. These events can, but do not necessarily, include militarized armed conflict so preventing conflict will not always prevent displacement. In Darfur, for example, some people became displaced because environmental problems destroyed their livelihoods. In other cases, the displacement of the population may have been the actual desired end state of the group that initiated the displacement. It could involve direct persecution of the targeted group by another group.

### **Location, Length of Displacement, and Access to “Outside” World**

As previously noted, some African refugee populations are located in camps, for either political or practical reasons, while others are interspersed within urban civilian populations. Throughout the discussion, several participants emphasized the degree to which this locale distinction matters and how. Though African camps are still a mainstay on the continent, the increased urbanization of refugee/IDP populations has broad implications for the levels of vulnerability many refugee/IDP populations might face.<sup>21</sup> The unique situations of refugees in camps and those in urban areas must be acknowledged as well as the notion that no two camps or urban areas are completely alike. The level of entrenchment of a particular displaced population in the outside world may also be important in determining whether the population will be a target of militarization as well as the duration of its displacement.

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<sup>20</sup> As part of this discussion, one participant observed that the particular reasons nomadic populations relocate may be important in some African contexts.

<sup>21</sup> It should not be assumed, however, that all refugees/IDPs not located in camps live in urban areas. Some relocate to rural farming areas. Such is the case, as one expert noted, of displaced Zimbabweans living along the border area in South Africa. However, IDPs also face the struggle of providing for their basic needs.



## Camps

This discussion underscored the idea that no two African refugee camps are the same. Camps that are run by African governments, for example, may take a different form than those run by international organizations such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Each may be afforded different levels of protection and may have different levels of resources to provide for the residents' basic needs. The participants discussed possible relationships between the levels of protection and needs provisions in place at the camp, the time in which the displaced people spend in the camp, and the degree to which the residents of the camps are vulnerable to militarization. They stressed that although these distinctions are important in determining which populations or segments of them might become vulnerable to militarization, the important role that modern technology plays in most all camps cannot be underestimated. The location of a particular camp can also be an important determinant in shaping the kinds of militarized individuals within a camp can undertake.

Several experts stressed that in times of violent conflict, displacement is vast. Many people move en masse to camps for practical reasons. However, though conflict is the initial reason for displacement for all of these people, other dimensions need to be considered when determining how long people stay at a camp. These dimensions include the degree to which the camp provides access to resources the individuals would not otherwise have and the individuals' particular economic status. As one expert asserted, when the living conditions are better, camp residents tend to want to stay in camps longer. In Ghana, for example, some camps provided access to entertainment for their residents. In Burundi, those in the camps were afforded educational opportunities they would not have had if they were not in a camp. Another discussant echoed this point and noted the decisions to stay or leave in camps, especially post-conflict, are shaped by a person's particular economic status. She asserted that when a conflict ends, the individuals with resources have likely already left the camp. Those who remain in the camps after fighting ceases are generally those that are the most poor and vulnerable. They still require the resources the camp provides to meet their basic needs. It is possible, as one expert hypothesized, that the longer one spends in a camp, the higher the likelihood that he/she will engage in militant action, though further research and study is needed to determine the validity of this claim.

Though the participants agreed on the importance of these distinctions, they also articulated the need to consider how some dimensions of camp life transcend particular contexts. One expert suggested that most camps in Africa today are deeply entrenched in the outside world. To explain this modern technological phenomenon, this expert described a recent picture of an African refugee camp. The picture captures a camp alley: on one side is a donkey and on the other side is a large satellite dish. Because of this access to modern technology, the residents in the camps are aware of the political and social situations of their broader environment and in some cases, may have access to diaspora communities. Cellular phones, for example, are prevalent in camps.<sup>22</sup> Due to this entrenchment, it is more likely that camp residents will have the capability to engage in political action (and in some cases, become involved in militant activity) though they would need to have a motivation to do so.

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<sup>22</sup> As part of this discussion one participant suggested a further examination of how cellular phones have changed the nature of conflict more broadly.

An armed group seeking to recruit camp residents to engage in its illicit activities can directly or indirectly leverage this existing communicative technology. The degree to which the camp residents, whether in whole or in part, are (self) mobilized may also be an important factor in determining the potential for them to become targets for militarization and, in some cases, militarized.

It was also observed, however, that communicative technology may not be enough to overcome location restraints in every context and allow every camp, regardless of its location, to have the same potential to be a hotbed for militarized activity and/or particular forms of it. As several experts observed, the opportunities presented to those residing in camps in isolated areas may be different than those presented to residents of camps in urban areas. One expert observed that, additionally, a location in or near an African state capitol may afford camp residents and external armed groups with certain militant action opportunities which are not afforded in other urban environments. Likewise, different opportunities may be present near African state border areas that are not present elsewhere.

### Urban Areas

Many of the participants emphasized that the security situation a refugee/IDP population faces in an African urban area often varies greatly, perhaps even more so than in camps. Given this variance, they stressed the importance of understanding all of the dynamics relevant to particular urban refugee/IDP populations in Africa to help determine the degree to which the populations are vulnerable to militarization. One participant hypothesized that the mixed and disaggregated nature of these populations has great implications for their potential to become militarized, whether in whole or in part. That is, there may be a greater potential for militant threats to percolate from displaced populations in African urban areas than in other ones. It was noted, however, that this relationship needs to be studied further.

The participants further explored this variance. In some cases, as one participant asserted, the displaced populations are “ghettoized” or “clustered” in a given area. In other cases, pockets of these populations are interspersed among non-displaced civilians. In the latter case, the distinctions between those who are displaced and those who are not can be considerably blurred. In some African urban contexts, it may be possible to distinguish those who are displaced from those civilians who are not based on whether they receive protection and aid, but this is not always the case. Not every person who has been displaced to another country has refugee status.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, IDPs are not always afforded such protection support and aid. The degree to which a particular displaced group in a non-camp environment receives protection and aid based on its displaced status, and the degree to which those services adequately meet its basic needs, may have broad implications for the group’s potential to turn to militant activities to support its survival.

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<sup>23</sup> One example of a refugee population not having refugee status, and therefore not receiving the protection articulated within international legal frameworks, are the Zimbabweans in South Africa, though many of them live in the rural border area. The difference between a refugee, IDP, and illegal immigrant needs to be understood. In some cases, these distinctions are crucial in understanding the situations a grouping of displaced persons faces in a particular context.

As one participant noted, the level of integration of a particular grouping of refugees/IDPs within the general population may be important in determining whether and how armed groups will target it for recruitment and its militarization potential. The group's livelihoods; relative access to technological (cellular phones, for example), economic, and other resources; the degree to which the population or subsection of it is (self) mobilized; and the length of time the group has been displaced all play a role in determining whether or not it will be targeted for and possibly engage in militant activity and, further, the type of activity in which the group will participate.

### **Age and Gender**

There were two lines of thinking among the participants as to whether or not gender “matters” in determining whether a given refugee/IDP population or sub-population will be susceptible to militarization. One participant suggested that, at a general level, in camps, there may not be a major gender distinction at play in determining a person's vulnerability to militarization in the African context. Some women are vulnerable while others are not. Another participant suggested another dimension to consider was age. Though she did not debate the general assertion that gender is not a defining factor in determining a particular person's vulnerability to militarization, she suggested that in Africa, young men and children might in particular be a target for militarization (as discussed above) when an ongoing armed conflict situation exists and more manpower is needed to achieve a certain military outcome.

### **Economic Status**

Although the participants in the discussion asserted that conflict is a driver of poverty and that refugees/IDPs in ongoing conflict situations are generally likely to be facing severe economic hardships, several of them cautioned against assuming all refugees/IDPs in Africa experience the same levels of poverty. As one expert observed, not all are afforded the same level of protection/provision of their basic needs. The poverty levels particular groupings of IDPs face may vary more greatly because they are not protected within an existing international legal framework like refugees.

While economic status may determine whether a displaced person or group makes a decision to engage in militant activity, it is not the singular determinant factor. However, as Lischer stated in her paper, a refugee/IDP, especially at individual level, may join militant groups out of desperation and a need for survival or in some cases, opportunism. Participating in such activities could improve access to food and provide some economic security and the potential for material gain.

### **Ethnic, Religious, Ideological, and Political Affinities**

The participants generally agreed on the danger of assuming that all refugees/IDPs in Africa have ethnic, religious, ideological, and/or political affinities which would fundamentally motivate them to engage in militant action to support a cause. Additionally, it should not be assumed that all refugees/IDPs within a single population at one point in time have the same affinities or that these affinities play the same role in governing their actions. However, as Lischer noted in her paper, it is not out of the realm of possibility that some of these affinities, or a combination of them, might shape refugee/IDP decisions to join an

armed group and engage in illicit activities. The presence of conflict can impact the degree to which these affinities become important to some displaced people and groups.

When a conflict is occurring it should not be assumed, as one expert suggested, that all refugees within a given camp did not have any part in the conflict whether it is ethnic, religious, ideological, or political in nature. Refugees in camps may be perpetrators of violence or even former combatants. The existence of these groups, particularly former combatants, within African refugee camps may have broad security implications.

As one expert observed, former combatants (particularly from the losing side) may be among the first group to arrive at an African refugee camp in situations of conflict or post-conflict. It may be impossible for observers to identify former combatants within a given camp. It is likely that these combatants still maintain certain viewpoints regarding the conflict and the circumstances that catalyzed it, and, if motivated to act on those views and perceptions, the combatants could very well engage in militant activities while in the camp. These individuals could possibly encourage others in the camp to do the same - especially if their stay in the camps is long. Depending on which actors arrive at a camp first post-conflict, the former combatants' return to their "homes" may be prolonged and so they may spend more time in the camps than some other groups. Given the potentially long duration of their stay, it may be possible for them to extensively engage others with their views and facilitate further militarization of others within the camp. Thus, it is possible these affinities will shape not only the former combatants' action, but potentially others' actions as well.

As one expert observed, however, in some context, some of these affinities can also be important in shaping refugee/IDP decisions at an even more macro level. Larger issues, such as religious fundamentalism, may broadly impact whether or not larger groups of refugees will pursue militant activities, particularly in African urban areas.<sup>24</sup> It may not be enough, for example, to know the religious affiliation (if one exists) of a displaced population or segment of it. One may need to know whether or not the people in question practice a fundamentalist variety of that religion to discern their possible vulnerabilities to militarization. Continuing along the conversation line on fundamentalism but focusing more on camp situations, another expert re-emphasized the importance of contextual factors in determining whether certain displaced populations may be persuaded to take militant action for fundamentalist reasons. Somalis, for example, are not normally fundamentalists, though there is a possibility that some fundamentalists may be fostering their beliefs and sharing them with other Somalis in camps because the opportunity exists.

Another expert echoed the need to consider religion as a transformative factor in shaping refugee/IDP militancy prospects in Africa in particular. One reason for this is that the assistance that churches and other religious organizations provide to refugee/IDP populations in Africa is visible to those receiving the aid and other observers. The refugees and IDPs that receive humanitarian aid from these organizations (as well as others who observe it) may be persuaded to join with these organizations and advance their cause,

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<sup>24</sup> This expert identified the degree to which religious fundamentalism can transform the nature of the displaced population and militancy problem in the Africa over the long-term as an area for future research. She also tagged the possible intersection of these issues with terrorism-related ones as another area for more study.

whether those causes are fundamentalist in nature or not, particularly if they are the most vulnerable and have no other option than to accept assistance from these organizations to provide for their basic needs. In some cases, these organizations may use militant actions to advance their cause, creating a security situation.

Yet another expert agreed that religion may be important in some African contexts and asked whether demographic shifts, such as the convergence of Muslim and Christian communities in some areas of Africa (such as Ethiopia), might also be an important dimension to consider as to whether certain groups of refugees/IDPs may become militarized. She hypothesized that these shifts may have different security implications for refugee/IDP populations in urban areas than in rural ones. This convergence may be used as one reason to engage in militant action if a motivation to leverage it exists.

As part of this discussion, the participants also discussed whether the presence of conflict is an important determinant in shaping refugee/IDP militarization in Africa. They agreed the presence of a conflict may be an important factor in determining militarization potential of affected refugee/IDP groups, and they cited several dimensions of this possible relationship that need to be explored. One expert suggested that, as conflict can be an initial driver for displacement, some refugees/IDPs that are displaced because of it may be persuaded to support militant causes if they think those activities will help them (whether as individuals or collective entities) seek revenge on those who are seen as the perpetrators of their forced displacement.

In some cases, a particular segment of a refugee/IDP population may be committed to a particular outcome of a conflict. As one participant observed, in these cases, they may become politicized and the desire for that particular outcome may motivate them to engage in militant activities to support the attainment of a particular outcome. Another discussant echoed this point and further suggested that those refugees/IDPs that are more victimized may be more likely to help perpetuate a conflict if they see it as a means to achieve their goal of attaining basic security. This relative level of victimization (whether real or perceived) may also be related to the level of protection and provision of basic needs these individuals are afforded as refugees/IDPs.

### **The Details: Intersections with Other Security Challenges**

Within this discussion, the experts pointed out several points of intersection between refugee/IDP security issues and other security issues shaping the contemporary African security environment. They advocated for a holistic approach to understand not only refugee/IDP security challenges (including militarization), but also to understand the way in which it is impacted by and impacts other security issues. Three dimensions of this relationship were briefly explored as it relates to Africa: smuggling, conflict, and governance/corruption issues.

#### **Smuggling**

The discussants observed the potential for African refugees situated in camps in particular to engage in the illicit smuggling of weapons or drugs – whether at a local level or as part of a much larger network. Within this context, they broadly asserted the importance of not

assuming one needs to be a “good guy” to reside in an African refugee camp. With the proper motivation, any refugee could support these activities by moving in and out of camps. However, it should not be assumed that every refugee in every African refugee camp has the same opportunity and access to move in and out of the camp and conduct illicit smuggling activities. One expert noted that refugees living in camps near state borders may have more opportunities to trade weapons due to their location and comparative mobility. Echoing this point, another discussant advocated for further study of these relationships to better understand the pattern of movements in and out of particular African refugee camp locations and the implications of these patterns in refugee movement for the current and future state of illicit smuggling networks in Africa. Mobility levels vary from camp to camp.

Several participants also noted the potential for armed groups to use refugees/IDPs to support the mining and smuggling of diamonds. One participant offered some examples, including the use of displaced people to perpetuate diamond conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola. She also cited reports of al Qaeda using displaced people in Sierra Leone to mine diamonds and noted the potential intersection between these diamond issues and terrorism concerns in some African contexts.<sup>25</sup> In both contexts, diamond smuggling is an integral way for armed groups to provide for their economic needs and/or to achieve some political or ideological goal in Africa.

### **Conflict**

The participants observed that not only can conflict in and of itself be one direct or indirect reason for initial displacement for many African people, but there are also several other issues within the conflict domain which are impacted by and/or impact refugee/IDP security situations within contemporary African contexts. Although many issues could be discussed in this context, the participants briefly highlighted a few of them including child soldiering, peacekeeping, repatriation, and the re-emergence of conflict in post-conflict situations.

As discussed previously, young refugees/IDPs provide a viable recruiting pool for manpower to support African armies, militias, and other paramilitary organizations. Child soldiering is a human security concern in the African context, but the use of children also has regional and international security implications. Reported instances of some armed groups using children and young men to engage in conflict include the previously discussed example of the Kenyan military using Somalis in Dadaab camps to fight the Islamists in Somalia and the Liberian case in which children were used to fight the rebels.<sup>26</sup>

The presence of refugees/IDPs in or near a conflict zone also impacts the degree to which (and how) peacekeeping operations successfully function in Africa. As one expert observed, in many cases, peacekeepers lack the training to effectively operate in a situation which

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<sup>25</sup> As noted previously, there is also a potential concern of terrorist groups situating their bases for activity within refugee/IDP populations. The displaced people can not only serve as potential recruits, but also provide them with shield/sanctuary.

<sup>26</sup> Several participants noted the difficulties in distinguishing between who is a child and who is a young man. As seen in the Dadaab camps in Kenya, young men (who are no longer under 18) may be vulnerable to militant recruitment. The impacts of this recruitment on both them and, in some cases, their families may be similar to those associated with child soldiers.



involves refugees/IDPs and address the unique needs of this population as they seek to promote peace. The presence of refugees/IDPs complicates the security situation in which the peacekeepers have to operate and can make already difficult African conflict response situations that much more complex.

Another issue to consider is post-conflict repatriation. As was observed several times during the meeting, former combatants (particularly from the losing side of a conflict) and other perpetrators of violence may also reside in refugee camps when a conflict is ongoing along with “the innocent” (some of whom may also become militarized while displaced). As one expert observed, their repatriation after a conflict ends may result in pockets of extremism or rises in extremism in the areas to which they return. However, as another expert noted, it should not be assumed that all displaced people return to the area where they resided prior to displacement. Third country repatriation (or the repatriation of a refugee to a country other than the receiving or sending state) instances, especially in the case of child soldiers, also need to be examined for security implications.<sup>27</sup>

In some cases, this repatriation may lead or contribute to the (re-)emergence of conflict with the help of the refugees. This “war trap” phenomenon, as one expert noted, was experienced in Liberia. She postulated that this phenomenon is more likely in situations where conflict was the initial reason for the refugees’ displacement and less likely in situations where people were displaced due to a natural disaster or some other event. In many cases disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programming are not available to the displaced populations in Africa after a conflict ends. If the displaced populations continue to have easy access to weaponry and are not properly demobilized and reintroduced to society, they may have more opportunities to facilitate a return to conflict under some circumstances. However, motivational factors need to be examined.

### **Governance and Corruption Issues**

As part of this broad discussion, several participants noted a potential flashpoint issue: political officials directly or indirectly using refugees/IDPs to achieve a particular election result. This suggests a possible intersection between refugee/IDP security issues and governance/corruption ones in the African context. This interaction can take two forms: the refugees/IDPs can be denied voting provisions (as is the case for the displaced in Khartoum, Sudan for the 2011 elections, as two experts observed) or political officials can use them or their presence to encourage particular forms of voting to help ensure their election. In both cases, the displaced are pawns for the manipulation of elections. Another expert observed that this political manipulation of refugees/IDPs is most possible in settlements which are close to the capital (as is the case in Ghana), or more generally in urban areas. She noted this is less of an issue in isolated border camps in Africa.

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<sup>27</sup> The participants briefly discussed the intersection between health and security issues in this context. For example, although a positive HIV status of a refugee relocating to a Western third country is usually not viewed as a potential security issue, one expert wondered whether in some circumstances these health matters might be analyzed with a security lens over the long-term.

## SECTION 6: DISCUSSION SUMMARY – ENGAGEMENT ISSUES

In addition to considering the nature of the refugee/IDP militarization problem in Africa, the participants also discussed a broad set of issues involved in U.S. and other state engagement on the problem within this context. They considered U.S. interests in addressing the challenge and the degree to which African governments, citizens, and other responders might perceive the challenge space differently. To bridge the gap between the discussion of the particular challenge and engagement strategies, the participants also considered the degree to which decision makers should focus on root causes or effects of refugee/IDP militarization when formulating engagement strategies and the particular complexities decision makers face when refugee/IDP situations accompany conflict. Although they also offered several dimensions of the problem which require more engagement, the participants did not generally discuss which specific entities might be best fit to engage in which areas. The participants also identified those dimensions of the challenge requiring further research.

### The Details: U.S Interests in Engaging in this Challenge Space

The participants broadly discussed the evolution of U.S. interests in Africa and indicated that this increased interest in Africa's macro security issues has broad implications for the way in which this particular security challenge is viewed. They suggested that U.S. interests lie in addressing several security issues which intersect with refugee/IDP militancy ones, including terrorism, conflict, and natural resources-based ones. Focusing mostly on the terrorism issue, the participants observed that U.S. interests in reducing the threat of terrorism globally could be leveraged, both by African governments and the United States, in shaping responses to refugee/IDP security problems. They also briefly considered the ways in which USAFRICOM, the newest form of U.S. engagement on the continent, might engage to address refugee/IDP security issues in the region over the long-term.

### *Terrorism Interests*

The participants broadly agreed that there is both increased interest within the U.S. Government in reducing the global threat of terrorism and addressing many macro-level African security issues. Given this, overall U.S. security engagement strategies in Africa may be framed, in whole or in part, by this global terrorism threat reduction interest. Turning their focus to the specific challenge of refugee/IDP militarization in Africa, the participants noted the ways in which both the United States and African governments could examine this challenge area within a terrorism-focused paradigm. To this end, one participant identified counter-terrorism and insurgency as being an interest. Given this interest, U.S. actors are likely to focus on reducing the potential for refugee and IDP settlements to serve as bases for recruitment and/or sanctuaries or havens for al Qaeda-affiliated groups when formulating security-focused engagement strategies to address refugee/IDP issues. A broad question then – which went unanswered – was whether this interest would be beneficial to ensure African refugees/IDPs are protected. Regardless of the answer to this question, the participants cautioned against any state over exaggerating and overstating the possible terrorism dimension of a particular instance of an African refugee/IDP security problem

because it is likely the analysis of the realities will be skewed and the responses will not be suitable to address the real security issues at play.

The participants also discussed how some African governments could inappropriately spin their own refugee/IDP security situations using terrorism-focused language to achieve their own interests which may be unrelated to terrorism threat reduction. A general perception among some African governments (whether real or not) is that if a conflict or other security situation has a terrorism dimension, there is likely more Western, and in particular U.S., interest in intervening to address it.<sup>28</sup> Because of this, as one expert observed, some African governments may be prone to leveraging these U.S. interests to obtain the United States' aid to address their refugee/IDP problems. This may include development assistance. Another possibility also exists; some African governments at the potential receiving end of refugees may use this terrorist threat angle as a way to avoid accepting refugees from neighboring states. These governments' rationales for declining the refugees may be framed in security terms and cite potential terrorism risks. In either case, this may have broad implications for response, some of which may be negative.

### ***Ways for USAFRICOM to Engage***

The participants broadly asserted that there were security dimensions to the refugee/IDP militancy problem in Africa, and USAFRICOM might have a role in supporting the U.S. Government's engagement strategy in this area over the long-term. USAFRICOM might provide a mechanism to integrate U.S. responses to these refugee/IDP security issues on the continent. Although it is clear, as one expert suggested, that African refugee/IDP security issues are not an immediate focus within the Command, it is possible that the Command will focus more on these issues as it advances, and therefore the Command needs to gain an understanding of how these problems manifest in Africa now and how they might evolve. She added that given the Command's future oriented outlook, which involves a 5-10 year long-term planning perspective, it is interested in identifying those things which may become security issues before they do. Therefore, it is imperative for researchers examining African refugee/IDP issues to point out and suggest issues in this area which might emerge and evolve over the long-term.

Within this future-oriented context, several participants highlighted some broad ways in which the Command might consider engaging with other actors to address refugee/IDP security issues in the African region. One participant noted the potential for the Command having a "big picture" role in implementing the United States' refugee/IDP security engagement strategy in Africa. She asserted that it should collaborate with other actors and emphasized that USAFRICOM might not be the most appropriate actor to lead those efforts which are focused on providing development or humanitarian assistance to

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<sup>28</sup> Within the context of this discussion, several participants wondered how the U.S. interest in Darfur can be explained as there is no apparent terrorism angle to this problem. The potential relationship between U.S. interests in the Trans-Sahel region of Africa (of which the Sudan is not a part, though it is in close proximity) and its interests in Darfur were examined as well as the role of the NGO community in promoting U.S. response to the genocide there.

refugee/IDP populations. She suggested that U.S.-initiated development activities should continue to be led by the United States Agency for International Development.<sup>29</sup>

Responding to this idea, another expert observed that USAFRICOM, given its broad focus and role in integrating engagement, might consider how its general security-focused and capacity-building efforts might intersect with peace-building ones and how they might use this intersection and provide leverage points to deal with African refugee/IDP security problems in particular. One possible way to do this is for it to identify those approaches which encourage positive deviance of refugee/IDP communities and facilitate those activities. In whatever activities it conducts, another expert suggested, due to its military relationship, USAFRICOM will likely have to grapple with such issues as how to build trust between refugees/IDPs and the Command itself.

### **The Details: Implications of Divergent Perceptions of the Challenge**

The participants briefly discussed how African governments might have different perceptions of the refugees/IDP and militancy challenges than the average African citizen and other external actors charged with addressing these challenges; however, they collectively cautioned against assuming that there is a single African government view of the challenge, a single African citizen view of these issues, and a single view for all external actors. As one participant stressed, context matters and the perceptions and interests of all actors involved in responding to (and/or impacted by) a particular instance of the challenge need to be examined to understand the situation and address it. Differences in these views and interests can have the potential to further destabilize already unstable security situations.

Though it is imprudent to discuss “African and external actor views” of the challenge on a general basis, the participants offered several insights which demonstrated some of the ways these views could generally differ in Africa, though particular contextual dimensions of situations need to be examined to fully understand the nature of these differences and the possible implications of them. For example, African citizens who are impacted by refugee/IDP concerns may be more focused on the human security dimensions of them while African governments may be more consumed with maintaining power at all costs when examining and responding to refugee/IDP and militancy issues in their domain. As another expert noted, many humanitarian organizations charged with assisting African governments in addressing refugee/IDP security issues may view those issues with a primarily (if not solely) protection-based lens. This may result in competing agendas between the African government and the international organization – a result which has broad implications for the potential success of any engagement strategy.

As another expert observed, the potential views of African governments about this challenge and how to respond to it may be further disaggregated. The African government that is receiving refugees from another state is likely to view the issues differently than the

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<sup>29</sup> The authors of this report acknowledge that USAFRICOM does not lead general U.S. development activities in the region and its main function now relates to military to military engagement and capacity building in addition to providing additional assistance, when requested, in integrating other U.S. security activities in the region. USAFRICOM continues to focus on identifying where it might provide value added to existing efforts.

government that is in sending mode. These differences may exasperate already precarious relationships between neighboring African states expected to both deal with refugee flows and related security problems. In some cases, as one expert observed, the state government which has been asked to take refugees from another state can cite a “destabilization risk” as a means of keeping the refugees out of their territory. Instances of destabilization resulting from the presence of refugees (and possibly other factors) have been observed in Africa in the past. In South Africa’s history, some refugees were targets of violence by some sectors of the South African population. Later, this targeting expanded to include non-refugee foreigners.

In instances where the identified receiving state actually accepts the refugees, divergent viewpoints between the sending and receiving state can still be present and have broad implications for the degree to which those states can successfully cooperate to address domestic and regional security issues related to the refugee flow. In some cases, tensions can rise so high that the two states engage in a war. Although not every case of these tensions between the sending and host states results in international war, it is, as Lischer notes in her paper, a possibility. Under certain conditions, a motivated government or other actor at the receiving end could use refugees to launch cross-border attacks against an “enemy” state. In other cases, states could leverage the mere presence of refugees to demonstrate a security threat and initiate violence. The outbreak of international war would have broad human security implications, but also regional and international ones.

### **The Details: Analytic Decisions and Complexities**

#### **Decisions to Focus on Root Causes or Effects**

Within the context of the more focused discussion on refugee/IDP and militarization challenges, the participants pondered a fundamental question which decision makers need to ask when they are required to examine and respond to any security challenge: when should decision makers focus on the deep root causes of a security challenge and when should they focus more on the end-state. One participant observed that, although the decision maker cannot focus on root causes for a given security situation first, the decision maker needs to know what they are and consider them when developing engagement plans. This causal analysis cannot and should not be the only dimension that is explored, though it should be considered, as it can enlighten a decision maker on why events are occurring in the way that they are. As one expert suggested, the decision maker should also consider which actions might make the challenge worse – whether by upsetting the balance of power in a given environment, creating more conflict, or serving as a catalyst for another event or problem which would make the security situation more precarious.

#### **Decisions in Conflict Situations**

In addition to understanding causes and effects of a particular instance of refugee/IDP militancy or militarization, the participants broadly asserted the need for decision makers to understand which variables are at play in shaping the security situation they are examining. Several participants also noted that the independent and dependent variables that need to be considered in refugee/IDP militancy situations to understand the security situation are not the same in every instance of the problem. Even within the same instance of a problem, the



relative importance of specific variables in understanding the situation can change as the situation evolves. A situation of refugees being displaced due to an ongoing conflict demonstrates this complexity.

In this situation, decision makers are faced with decisions not only related to the displaced population but also the broader conflict at play. In this context, decision makers not only need to understand the particulars of the refugee/IDP situation, but also all of the dimensions of the broader conflict which impact and are impacted by the situations the refugees/IDPs face. This requires not only deep knowledge of both of these elements, as one participant observed, but also an understanding of how they relate to one another.

Because conflicts evolve, it is not prudent to suggest that the variables which need to be analyzed to make decisions about refugees/IDPs are the same throughout the conflict period. The particular stage of conflict that is being experienced is important to determining which variables need to be studied, their relationship with one another, and their salience in shaping the situation. In some stages of conflict, as one participant noted, refugees/IDPs might be considered outcomes or dependent variables. In others, the refugees/IDPs themselves might be “causes” of security threats or independent variables. In others still, the refugees/IDPs might be intervening variables with the independent and dependent variables being, as another expert suggested, conflict (violence) and militarization. Though this seems to be an analytic/academic issue, the participants stressed the importance of considering these analytic complexities in decision making contexts. Depending on the stage of conflict and the variables at play, the decision makers may have different concerns and problems to address, which in turn requires different tool sets and approaches to address them, and different sets of responses to consider, evaluate, and eventually implement.

The participants further discussed how the life cycle of conflicts also impacts a responder’s decisions on how to address a refugee/IDP security problem. They stressed that the life cycle of the particular conflict needs to be understood to prioritize engagement actions in any situation. Protection of the refugees in and of themselves, as one expert noted, may be important in the initial stages of conflict until fighting ends. In post-conflict situations, decision makers may need to focus less on the immediate refugee/IDP protection issues and more on long-term development activities to avoid situations where the displaced become too dependent on external assistance in the long-term. This situation could give rise to additional security problems.

### **The Details: Areas for External Engagement**

Throughout the course of the discussion, the participants offered several dimensions of African refugee/IDP security issues requiring further external engagement. These include managing security within African refugee camps, facilitating information flow and exchanges between displaced populations and responder communities, providing development assistance, and managing the repatriation of refugees post-conflict. In general, there was little discussion of the ways in which specific actors might support these endeavors though the participants broadly asserted the need for collaboration.



### **Managing Security within African Refugee Camps**

The discussion about managing security within camps proceeded along two lines: the nature of African refugee camps, including why they are created in the first place and the ways in which responders might provide for the security of camp residents. It was largely observed that although being in a camp is not always a “good thing” for residents, there is a certain level of protection and provision of resources to the residents which may not be available to them they were not in a camp. That said, more effective policing is required to provide security for camp residents. The focus of this policing should not be limited to demilitarization, but it should take a broader approach to the provision of security.

### **Nature of African Refugee Camps**

To frame the discussion on how to improve the security of African refugee camps so that their residents are less vulnerable to militarization and other security threats, the participants first examined why these camps are created in the first place. As one expert noted, African refugee camps are created for one of two reasons: practicality or political motivation.

As one expert observed, in situations of sudden mass movement of displaced populations, those charged with responding to the mass influx of people into an area may view the quick creation of settlements (camps) as their only option to quickly and efficiently protect and provide for the basic needs of the affected populations in the short term. It is important to note, however, that these incidences of mass movement, such as was the case with the Rwandan refugees in 1994, are relatively rare in Africa today. In those limited situations, quickly constructing camps may make it easier for those charged with response to know where the displaced are heading, but it may be more difficult to properly develop a camp and related infrastructure and services to address all needs of its residents due to capacity and resource issues. These refugee camps are designed to be a short-term solution to mass influxes of people in Africa across state borders.<sup>30</sup> The situation that is far more common in Africa is one in which there is a slow trickle of refugees across state borders in a given time period.<sup>31</sup> In these instances, the responders can plan more thoroughly to develop camps through collaborative processes involving both government and non-government partners. These can provide a more stable solution to the influx because more time can be devoted to dealing with the situation.

The other motivation for camp development is political. In some cases, a government may create a camp to put a certain group or population under closer control. This, as another

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<sup>30</sup> This participant observed that most African governments are reluctant to sustain camps over the long-term (20+ years) due to the level of resources needed to provide separate services to the resident population while also ensuring they are meeting the basic needs of the rest of the civilian population. Government capacity, resource, and will issues need to be examined to understand these decisions.

<sup>31</sup> As part of this discussion, one participant noted that not every African state government develops camps to deal with sustained refugee influx situations. Two examples of states opting not to develop these settlements include South Africa and Egypt. In these situations, people are largely settled in urban areas and have to struggle individually to meet their own basic needs. In some cases, however, these populations settle in rural border areas in farming communities. As previously mentioned, an example of this is the Zimbabweans in South Africa.

expert observed, was the case in Ghana. These camps are usually located near or in state capitals, as was the camp in Ghana.

### **Areas for Improvement**

In most instances, the African refugee camps provide the residents with security, resources, and in some cases, an international presence overseeing all actions and decisions related to the camp. However, as previously noted, the degree to which these things are provided varies from camp to camp. When these resources and security are adequately provided, at least in the short term, the residents of camps may be less likely to be forced to meet their survival needs elsewhere by participating in illicit activities. Therefore, the participants identified a need for more external engagement to ensure that all camp residents receive adequate protection and aid. This includes both provision of aid and broad-based protection. However, with this recommendation other questions emerge. Who should provide this security? What does this security protection entail? As one expert observed, questions of mandates and mission space of the potential “protectors” need to be examined in all contexts. The potential responders can include the United Nations, the African government within the state where the camp is located, or a non-African government. In some cases, protection may be a military mission and in other cases it might be a police one. These particulars need to be examined in all contexts.

Taking the discussion of protection options one step further, the participants identified some ways to generally improve policing within African refugee camps. Demilitarization of refugees, as one expert observed, should not be the only focus of policing efforts within these settlements. Those charged with policing need to be properly trained to deal with all issues within a refugee context, including human security-related ones. They should be able to deal with individual crimes within the camps, but they should also understand and know how to deal with community-based conflicts. Within this context, the expert observed that it might be useful to make refugee camps in Africa “zones of security” or areas where specific security measures need to be employed much like war zones. To allow for effective policing, as another expert observed, the responding security force needs to be capacitated to fulfill its role and obligation in this area.

Taking the discussion even further, one participant discussed how African camps struggling with policing problems could implement practices that have worked in other camps and adapt them to meet their own particular security needs. She cited the police force in the camps in Dadaab, Kenya as a potential model for other camp organizers to follow; the camp administration was provided the capacity to develop its policing strategy and was trained in refugee rights. Another way to enhance effective camp policing was employed in Guinea. There, the Canadian constabulary forces provided policing assistance and trained local forces. To this end, the expert suggested that training workshops, at which retired police forces teach active forces, might be a useful approach to efficiently conducting broad-based training. Several police forces could participate in a single workshop, providing participants with an opportunity to learn from each other’s experience and apply that knowledge to address their own issues. However, in all cases, the participant suggested that these police supporting activities need to be developed and implemented carefully. Quick approaches to “solving” issues can open the door to other security problems. Good entry points include the provision of information on best practices and financial assistance to develop capacity.

In all cases, any plans for capacity-building and training of police should be based on good understanding and knowledge of the particular security situation, as well as the population dynamics associated with that camp.

### **Facilitating Information Flow and Exchanges**

Another area for possible engagement includes facilitating information exchanges within refugee/IDP populations in Africa and between those populations and those charged with responding to the security problems they face. This problem has two dimensions. In some cases, information might simply not be getting to the displaced people who need to know it due to processes not being in place or existing processes not being efficient enough. In other cases, information might be withheld intentionally. In either case, problems with information flow have great implications for ensuring mutual understanding of the current security environments and the degree and ways in which certain engagement strategies will be successful.

One expert explained that one of the reasons for this information sharing deficiency was that although most African refugees/IDPs have access to cellular phones and other communicative technology, sometimes they don't have anyone to call who is able to provide them with accurate information about the situation they face. Asking family and friends for information might simply perpetuate a rumor network, which in and of itself, as another expert observed, is a problem to consider. One participant suggested that one way to facilitate the exchange of accurate information is to leverage the existing capabilities the U.S. military has to support and facilitate the spread of information and apply them to the specific African context. Others felt that this kind of government involvement would need to proceed with caution. If the U.S. government (whether a military component or a civilian one) was perceived as having a role in facilitating these exchanges, the information it provides could be viewed as propaganda, which would in turn be detrimental to creating a sense of trust in the information that is being provided.

Improving these exchanges, however, would not ameliorate all concerns regarding information flows in Africa. The participants explored the possibility of engagers actively holding back information from the affected displaced populations for solid reasons. For example, as one expert noted, a humanitarian organization may not actively disseminate information about resettlement opportunities because doing so could enable corruption and fraudulent actions. Therefore, a balance needs to be achieved in providing necessary information about current situations to the people who need to know it and eliminating possibilities that information, when provided, could be used maliciously when there is a motivation and intent to do so. One participant recommended – in all cases – that any effort to facilitate this information exchange, especially when conflict is part of the displacement equation, be preceded with a concerted research effort to understand all dimensions of the situation and the implications of that context for engagement.

### **Providing Development Assistance**

Within the security-focused discussion, the participants also discussed how development-focused efforts might positively impact the security situation in Africa. One dimension of this relationship was explored – the integration of refugees into the receiving state. In most

cases, as one participant observed, African government officials in receiving states do not appreciate the influx of refugees. These elite attitudes might flow down to the communities in which the refugees will settle. However, refugees often bring funding and development opportunities to the receiving state. These potential secondary benefits of refugee settlement, not only at the state level, but also the local level, need to be highlighted. Articulating these benefits could promote effective integration of refugees not only within states, but also local communities. It could also serve to decrease the possibility of targeted violence (or other forms of xenophobia) against refugee population due to their refugee status.

To facilitate these positive attitudes, one participant offered that humanitarian organizations and states addressing refugee flow issues should encourage African states and local communities not to put the refugees in camps (when possible) and instead focus on integrating them within the local population, thus facilitating development within the host community writ large. Building clinics, schools, and other public service institutions would not only improve the refugees' access to necessary human services while not creating situations of dependency, but it would also allow for the broader community to access these services and benefit from them over the long-term even if/when the refugees return home. This simultaneous development programming would work best in situations where the refugees arrive in the host state over time and development planning can occur.

The participant further suggested that even if it is impossible to fully integrate refugees into communities and camps become necessary for practical reasons (such as when there is a sudden mass influx of 500,000 refugees into a given area), community development activities are still possible and beneficial to the refugees and their broader communities. The timing of these activities would, however, need to be different. After refugees leave camps, for example, responders should focus on providing them development opportunities they were not afforded in camps. This may include access to land and cash through microfinance opportunities. These opportunities not only enhance the capacity of individual refugees to provide for their own needs over the long-term, but they also provide a secondary economic benefit to the communities in which the former refugees reside.

Participants noted, however that several dimensions of the security-development nexus need to be examined further in the African context. In particular, there is a lack of empirical evidence about the general security dividend of development activities. Assuming there is such a dividend in every context is dangerous, and it should not be presupposed that capacity-building efforts will always result in "good." Integration options are another area requiring further study. This includes a review as to how development activities, such as building clinics, can be integrated with security/military responses, and how those in turn can be integrated with peace-building efforts. Within this context, one participant surmised that humanitarian, development, and security organizations may not be the only actors that have the capacity to effectively address a problem and that the potential role of the peace-building community should also be examined. Overall, she emphasized those possible collaborative mechanisms for engagement on various aspects of the problem need to be considered.

### **Facilitating Repatriation**

The participants observed that refugee/IDP security challenges, including those stemming from militarization, do not always cease to exist when refugees return home. In some cases, such as those where conflict or direct persecution were the reason for their initial displacement, their return home can serve as an indirect or direct catalyst for violence and in some cases, a return to conflict. The participants explored several dimensions of the possible relationship between refugee/IDP return and instances of violence or a return to conflict in Africa.

One participant stressed the importance of responders knowing the particular context for refugee return when formulating and implementing repatriation plans to avoid or ameliorate other potential instability. For example, a responder not only needs to know why the refugees/IDPs were displaced in the first place but also the composition of the group returning home and how the refugees'/IDPs' "home" community perceives or might perceive that group when formulating these plans. It might be important to know, for example, if the group includes former combatants or other perpetrators of violence. These group dynamics can have major implications for the security situation that will result from the group's return at both a local and state level. In some cases it may not be possible for a group to return at all due to security threats or some other issue. Third country (in the case of IDPs) repatriation options might need to be explored.

The participants agreed that all of these dimensions need to be attended to in planning repatriation options and the individual, local, and state security implications of facilitating refugees' return under a certain set of conditions need to be explored. However, one participant cautioned against focusing solely on root causes such as reason for displacement when developing solutions to repatriation. She did not suggest they ignore this kind of contextual information, but rather consider them when trying to understand the current security problem the displaced face.

The security problems that may result from repatriation not only arise due to the plan not fitting the particular context; in some cases, no organization may exist to address refugee/IDP issues, including repatriation, over the long-term. Liberia, one participant noted, is an excellent case study to understand some of the challenges that can arise with repatriation over the long-term.

### **The Details: Areas for Future Research**

Several recommendations on ways to conduct future research emerged from the discussions.<sup>32</sup> The participants broadly underscored the need for more field research at a micro level in the African context to understand the current dimensions of African refugee/IDP challenges and how they might evolve. They advocated for developing databases of populations within camps in particular to facilitate this kind of research among a network of researchers.

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<sup>32</sup> This list represents a compilation of ideas for research writ large. The participants did not discuss the most appropriate sponsors/executors of the particular research topics.

Specific research areas include the following (not listed in priority):

- Research on how to deal with refugee/IDP protection challenges in the African context.
- Research on the relationship between the human security, regional security, and international security dimensions of the challenge space and the relevance of this kind of analytic framework.
- Research on the distinction between refugees, IDPs, and illegal immigrants in the African context and the differences between the security/militancy issues related to each category.
- Research on specific instances of refugee/IDP militancy in the African context to understand population dynamics, interests, and sources of insecurity.
- Research on specific African refugee camps using a case-study approach.
- Research to better understand trends within this challenge area, including urbanization of refugee/IDP populations, and what issues might emerge as the African security environment evolves.
- Research on the general differences in threats to/from integrated populations of refugees/IDPs and those to/from those residing in camps in Africa.
- Research on how to determine when threats are stemming from displaced populations in Africa and identify what kinds of responses are needed through counter-factual approaches.
- Research on how to employ community policing effectively in Africa and train peacekeepers to address security concerns associated with displaced populations.
- Research on the best practices on providing for camp security in Africa; issues surrounding the employment of local security forces within refugee camps in Africa; and best practices in training and leveraging intermingled security forces to respond to camp-based security problems.





**APPENDIX A:**  
**SARAH KENYON LISCHER, “FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND  
SECURITY CHALLENGES IN AFRICA”<sup>33</sup>**

*Note: The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. Department of Defense.*

The Rwandan refugee crisis of 1994 – in which tens of thousands of militants infiltrated camps in eastern Zaire, intimidated refugees, stole food aid, and launched cross border attacks – provides the mental template for many discussions of refugee militarization. The Rwandan Hutu state-in-exile created a nightmare scenario for humanitarian organizations and ultimately led to international war between Rwanda and Zaire. Using Rwanda as a reference point, however, provides a misleading view of present displacement crises. Currently, displaced populations in Africa do not resemble the “refugee warrior communities” described by Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo in the mid-1980s as:

highly conscious refugee communities with a political leadership structure and armed sections engaged in warfare for a political objective, be it to recapture the homeland, change the regime, or secure a separate state.<sup>34</sup>

In contrast to the “refugee warrior” framework, current refugee groups lack the political and military organization that characterized the Rwandan population in the mid-1990s. This implies that the policy recommendations debated in the Rwanda case, such as disarmament of refugees and the potential withholding of aid, are less applicable to current crises like Darfur and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Overall, meeting the basic survival needs of refugees and protecting them from armed groups is likely to reduce displacement-related security threats.<sup>35</sup>

This paper examines the dimensions of the displacement-related militancy challenge and how it intersects with a security framework. To accomplish this, I first explain my conceptualization of a “security framework.” I then assess the displacement situation in Africa, including actual or potential militancy risks. To develop that analysis, I will discuss the conflict region encompassed by Chad, Sudan, and Central African Republic. I conclude with some implications for U.S. national security interests regarding forced displacement in Africa.

### Conceptualizing a Security Framework

To discuss the refugee militancy issue within a security framework requires a clarification of that concept. I understand the security framework as having three dimensions. These are human security, regional security, and international security (which for the purposes of this paper I apply mostly in the U.S. context). The Human Security Report Project explains that the “term *human security* is now widely used to describe the complex of interrelated threats associated with international war, civil war, genocide, and the displacement of populations. Human security means, at minimum, freedom

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<sup>33</sup> I would like to thank Megan Huber for her valuable research assistance in finding sources used in this paper.

<sup>34</sup> Zolberg, Aristide R., Astri Suhrke, and Sergio Aguayo, *Escape from Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p.275.

<sup>35</sup> This is not to say that the situation could not change. New, more militant, populations could arise or current populations could become more radicalized. Thus, it may be useful to assess a wide range of policy options.

from violence, and from the fear of violence.”<sup>36</sup> Human security focuses on protecting the individual rather than the state. Traditionally, international security experts have discounted human security issues as peripheral to U.S. national interests.

In Africa, as elsewhere, threats to human security both drive violence and result from it. Destabilizing human security has become a major strategic objective in many African conflicts. Armed groups, in particular those who seek to control natural resources, need only terrorize and kill civilian populations to achieve their aims. The resulting massive displacement further erodes human security as the refugees and internally displaced suffer disease, hunger and violence. That dynamic contributes to the creation of “ungoverned spaces” as the government loses the ability, or willingly abandons its responsibility, to protect its citizens. The sheer magnitude of human suffering and human rights atrocities also feeds into a more traditional security framework, especially insofar as the United States defines its national interest in terms of the “responsibility to protect.” Based on his past experience in security sector reform, Sean McFate argues that “if there is a single lesson learned for the U.S. Department of Defense in recent years, it is that security is a precondition of development and that the failure of development can result in insecurity.”<sup>37</sup>

Most internal conflicts do not remain quarantined within national borders. Spillover often results from refugee flows and rebel movements, creating regional webs of conflict. These conflicts increase the likelihood of international war due to the use of cross-border rebel sanctuaries and resulting hot pursuit attacks.<sup>38</sup> Relying on the porous nature of many African borders, such webs of conflict have flourished and greatly complicated resolution efforts. In addition, regional security threats from conflict spillover have international security repercussions due to global concerns such as terrorist networks and oil supply.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) offers an excellent example of such regional conflict dynamics. A hallmark of the crisis in the Congo is the repeated displacement suffered by many of the two million internally-displaced persons there. Population movements are constantly changing, reflecting the unpredictable nature of the conflict. The most recent victims fled the 2009 Rwanda/Congo offensive against the remnants of the Rwandan rebel movement, the Democratic Liberation forces of Rwanda (FDLR). These 800,000 internally displaced persons suffered attacks from all sides.<sup>39</sup> For example, in mid-October 2009, Congolese government troops massacred dozens of Rwandan refugees and raped dozens more. The attack triggered a revenge massacre by the FDLR which killed nearly 100 civilians.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to the dire threats to human security, there are many aspects of the Central Africa conflict area that transcend national borders. One major international concern is the vast natural resources present in the eastern Congo. Rwandan involvement also provokes international anxiety,

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<sup>36</sup> Human Security Report Project. “miniAtlas of Human Security.” May 2008, p.2. Available at: <http://www.miniatlasofhumansecurity.info/en/access.html>.

<sup>37</sup> McFate, Sean. “Briefing: U.S. Africa Command: Next Step or Next Stumble?” *African Affairs*. 107, 426 (2008), 111-120, p.116.

<sup>38</sup> Salehyan Idean and Kristian Skrede Gleditch. “Refugees and the Spread of Civil War.” *International Organization*. 60, 2, (April 2006).

<sup>39</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. “Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): Massive Displacement and Deteriorating Conditions.” 12 August 2009, p.1. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org>.

<sup>40</sup> BBC News. “Congo Troops ‘Massacred Refugees.’” 16 October 2009. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/8310287.stm>.

considering it invaded DRC in 1996 and 1998. The United States has made a strong commitment to Rwanda, as evidenced by the new embassy that opened in 2008, and strongly desires stability in the region. The recent visit to DRC by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton highlighted the current administration's interest in human security issues in the region.<sup>41</sup> An additional, and unexpected, security controversy is raised by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the largest United Nations (UN) peacekeeping force currently deployed in Africa, since UN-supported Congolese troops have perpetrated many of the human rights atrocities against civilians. Although al-Qaeda related terrorism does not seem to have gained a foothold in this conflict, renewed international war would threaten U.S. interests in the region.

In recognition of non-traditional security threats, such as those exemplified by the Central Africa conflict, the revised U.S. Army/Marine Corps counterinsurgency field manual demonstrated a shift in past attitudes toward displacement. Rather than viewing it as a peripheral, humanitarian issue, the manual employs a more security-focused view:

An insurgency often creates many groups of internally displaced persons and refugees on short notice...Nongovernmental organizations and other civilian agencies normally furnish this support to internally displaced persons and refugees. However, conditions may prevent these agencies from providing these services quickly. Furthermore, in [counterinsurgency] operations, internally displaced person and refugee security may take on heightened military importance. Traumatized and dislocated persons may become vulnerable to insurgent threats and recruitment.<sup>42</sup>

Considering the changed perspective regarding displacement, in combination with the creation of the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), it seems plausible to anticipate increased attention to human security issues by the United States military.

### **Displacement Crises and Security Threats**

Throughout this paper I use the terms “displacement crisis” and “displaced populations” in addition to the term “refugee.” This is because many current crises concern internally displaced persons (IDPs) rather than refugees and there is a need for conceptual clarity between the two groups. In the mid-1990s, the major African crises involved refugees, such as those from Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Somalia, who had crossed into neighboring states. That pattern created a template for understanding and responding to refugee-related political violence which favored a marked distinction between refugee and IDP populations. Most scholarly work on militarization focused nearly exclusively on refugees.<sup>43</sup> Aid organizations and states also concentrated their energy on

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<sup>41</sup> Gettleman, Jeffrey. “Clinton Presents Plan to Fight Sexual Violence in Congo.” *The New York Times*, Aug. 12, 2009.

<sup>42</sup> U.S. *Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), Chapter 8, paragraphs 8-41.

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, Zolberg, Aristide R., Astri Suhrke, and Sergio Aguayo, *Escape from Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Terry, Fiona. *Condemned to Repeat: The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); Lischer, Sarah Kenyon. *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Loescher, Gil and James Milner. *Protracted Refugee Situations: Domestic and International Security Implications*. Adelphi Paper series (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2005; and Stedman, Stephen John and Fred Tanner (eds.) *Refugee Manipulation: War, Politics, and the Abuse of Human Suffering* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

refugees – with heated debates over who should be responsible for helping IDPs. The realities of actual population movements, however, have necessitated an increased attention to IDPs.

Before proceeding further, it is important to assess the similarities and differences between refugee and IDP populations. The most important distinction is that IDPs, unlike refugees, do not benefit from the protection of an international legal framework comparable to the *1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. Thus, it is harder to hold states accountable for their treatment of their own displaced citizens. In practice, however, despite that legal distinction, refugees and IDPs often exist in similar political spaces. When a state cannot control its periphery, IDP crises resemble refugee crises in regard to security and militancy issues. The same issues of cross-border violence and militarized camps will apply to IDP populations. Internally displaced populations are also more likely to live in active war zones, complicating humanitarian assistance efforts. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies now spend the majority of their time and resources in situations of internal displacement. For example, the emergency in Darfur has been labeled ‘the world’s worst humanitarian crisis’ and, at its highest point, the region hosted some 14,000 aid workers, most of whom focused on IDP assistance.<sup>44</sup>

The major displacement crises as of the end of 2008, in terms of numbers of refugees and IDPs, involve Somalia, DRC, Sudan, and Uganda (See Table 1). When grouped in conflict regions, one observes that the Sudan, Central African Republic (CAR), and Chad have generated over 5.6 million displaced people. The Central Africa conflict region (DRC, Uganda, Burundi, and Rwanda) has generated over 3.5 million displaced people. In the Horn of Africa, there are nearly 2 million refugees and IDPs from the Somalia conflict, which contributes to destabilization in the region.

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<sup>44</sup> Reuters. “Fear, Terror Still Stalk Sudan’s Darfur – Annan.” *The New York Times*, Dec. 29, 2005.

**Table 1. Locations of major refugee and IDP populations in sub-Saharan Africa**

<i>Major refugee-receiving states as of end-2008 (total numbers and major sending state)<sup>45</sup></i>	<i>Major refugee-sending state populations as of end-2008 (total numbers and major receiving states)<sup>46</sup></i>	<i>Major IDP populations as of end-2008<sup>47</sup></i>	<i>Overall, major displacement crises (refugees and IDPs by sending state)</i>
Tanzania 321,909 Burundi DRC	Somalia 559,153 Kenya Ethiopia	DRC 2,000,000	Sudan 5,297,013
Kenya 320,605 Somalia Sudan Ethiopia	Sudan 397,013 Chad Kenya	Somalia 1,300,000	DRC 2,367,995
Chad 302,687 Sudan CAR	DRC 367,995 Tanzania Rwanda Uganda Zambia	Sudan 4,900,000	Somalia 1,859,153
Ethiopia 201,700 Somalia Sudan	Burundi 281,592 Tanzania	Uganda 710,000	Uganda 860,448
Sudan 181,605 Eritrea Chad Ethiopia	Eritrea 181,971 Sudan	Cote d'Ivoire 600,000	Cote d'Ivoire 600,000
Uganda 162,132 Sudan DRC Rwanda	CAR 120,106 Chad	Kenya 400,000	Kenya 400,000
DRC 155,162 Angola Rwanda Burundi Uganda	Chad 55,105	CAR 108,000	Burundi 381,592
South Africa 144,700 Zimbabwe DRC Somalia		Chad 166,718	CAR 228,106
Zambia 113,200 DRC Angola		Burundi 100,000	Chad 221,823
Rwanda 55,062 DRC			

<sup>45</sup> Statistics from UNHCR tables, "Total Population of concern to UNHCR: Refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, returnees, stateless persons, and others of concern to UNHCR by country/territory of asylum, end-2008," Table 1. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a0174156.html>.

<sup>46</sup> Statistics from UNHCR tables, "Total Population of concern to UNHCR: Refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs, returnees, stateless persons, and others of concern to UNHCR by origin, end-2008," Table 2. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a0174156.html>.

<sup>47</sup> IDP statistics from Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), "Global Statistics: IDP country figures," 2008. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org>.



Both refugee and IDP populations are affected, as groups and individuals, by threats to human, regional, and international security. At the group level, leaders (including governments) may use displaced populations as war resources, military targets, demographic pawns, and shields/sanctuaries. The most extreme threats that can result from displacement crises include international war and the spread of terrorism. It is important to note that the various aspects of the security framework are intertwined and often create cause and effect loops, particularly between the factors of human security and regional security. In the following paragraphs, I will first analyze the security concerns at the group level and then discuss how they apply at the level of individual decision making.

### ***Group Level Factors in Militarization Threats***

*Resources.* Militants often view displaced populations as strategic resources. The mere presence of the refugees and IDPs, in concentrated and undefended locations, invites the recruitment (voluntary and involuntary) of both adults and children. For example, the United Nations and human rights groups have reported the abduction of thousands of displaced children in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>48</sup> Humanitarian aid and supplies can also act as a magnet for militant attacks. Theft of humanitarian aid may involve the abduction or murder of local and international aid workers. Another way in which militants manipulate aid is through controlling access to vulnerable populations and redirecting the distribution of aid. Such abuse of human and material resources diminishes the human security of refugees and IDPs by exposing them to constant threats of involuntary recruitment and the reduction of basic survival resources. Recruitment of fighters and misappropriation of aid also affects regional security by contributing to the war economy, and thus enabling prolongation of conflict.

*Targets.* Most wars target civilians; refugees and IDPs are no exception and make easy prey. Although they fled their homes to escape conflict, their new accommodations may prove even more dangerous. Attacks on displaced persons may occur across borders or within IDP settlements. This vulnerability further threatens the human security situation for displaced populations. At the level of regional security, attacks on refugees and IDPs reflect the logic of many communal conflicts. In these wars, combatant groups often view all members of the opposing group as enemies, despite their civilian status. By targeting refugees, such attacks highlight the weakness of the international protection regime and the legally responsible host state. In many cases, the attacks provoke a spiral of further displacement and regional destabilization.

*Demographic pawns.* Massive population movements create “facts on the ground” which are difficult to reverse after a conflict. This strategy is particularly effective in supporting the goals of territorial expansion and ethnic cleansing. Even if refugees and IDPs do not join militant groups, engineers of displacement know that their mere presence can exacerbate political tensions. The sheer magnitude of a major displacement crisis can discredit the government of the sending state by confirming its inability to maintain law and order.

*Shield/sanctuary.* Militants may position themselves within and around refugee/IDP camps as a way to hide and to more easily prey on the displaced people. The mixture of militants and civilians also

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<sup>48</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. “Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): Massive Displacement and Deteriorating Conditions.” 12 August 2009, p.7. Available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org>.

complicates efforts to defeat the militant groups. Separating and identifying militants hiding in camps requires significant resources. It also risks harming the refugees who may be caught in the middle.

*International war.* Potential, and more dangerous, threats to international security include the scenario of a refugee state-in-exile launching cross-border attacks in coordination with sympathetic states or rebel groups. At its most intense, such violence can spark international war, as it did between Rwanda and DRC in 1996 and 1998. International war can also occur when states view the mere presence of refugees as a threat, as India did in 1972 when inundated with 10 million refugees from East Pakistan/Bangladesh.

*Terrorism.* Another potential international security threat is that al-Qaeda affiliated groups will base themselves among displaced populations. A related concern is that weak or failed states will create “ungoverned spaces” which can become terrorist havens. Massive population movements generally result from such state weakness and can also further destabilize the sending and receiving states. Analysts express differing opinions about the al-Qaeda threat in Africa, although most caution against overstating the magnitude of the threat. Jessica Piombo has found that “the issue of ungoverned spaces, poor governance capacity, authoritarian regimes and an inability to control territories beyond those in the capital cities is not new in Africa. The novel element is that it is the Department of Defense that is now taking up these issues.”<sup>49</sup>

The Horn of Africa has received the most attention regarding the threat of international terrorism. With specific reference to al-Qaeda in the Horn, David Shinn argues that:

While acknowledging there is a real al-Qaeda problem in the region, there is a tendency by the United States, a few countries in the region, and al-Qaeda itself to exaggerate its impact and influence. This only plays into the hands of al-Qaeda and focuses scarce U.S. resources primarily on the short-term goal of tracking down al-Qaeda while reducing attention and resources for dealing with the long-term reasons why al-Qaeda has been able to function in the region. Eliminating al-Qaeda is important but it will not be accomplished solely by military action against suspected al-Qaeda operatives. It is time to confront this as a long-term challenge that addresses more effectively its root causes.<sup>50</sup>

After the Ethiopian intervention in Somalia on behalf of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in December 2006, Kenya closed its 682 km border with Somalia, denying entry to Somali would-be refugees. Kenya stated that Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) or al-Qaeda elements might attempt to cross into the country masquerading as refugees. The U.S. Department of State originally supported Kenya’s policy and explained that “Kenya’s then Foreign Minister Raphael Tuju said that Kenya was “not able to ascertain whether these people [Somali refugees] are genuine refugees or fighters and therefore it’s best that they remain in Somalia.”<sup>51</sup> By late 2008, the United States changed its position and encouraged Kenya’s government to re-open the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) transit center for Somalis. Following the Ethiopian

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<sup>49</sup> Piombo, Jessica. “Terrorism and U.S. Counter-Terrorism Programs in Africa: An Overview.” *Strategic Insights*, VI, 1 (Jan. 2007).

<sup>50</sup> Shinn, David H. “*Al-Qaeda* in East Africa and the Horn.” *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 27, 1 (Summer 2007), p.1.

<sup>51</sup> Human Rights Watch. “Kenya: Stop Recruitment of Somalis in Refugee Camps.” New York: Human Rights Watch, Oct. 22, 2009, p.12.

intervention, the potential for international skirmishes increased due to the increased deployment of Kenyan security forces along the Somalia border.<sup>52</sup>

### ***Individual Level Factors and Militarization Threats***

In addition to understanding displacement-related security issues at the group level, it is useful to examine individual decision making of refugees and IDPs. At the micro-level, the erosion of human security creates mechanisms conducive to individual participation in militant activity. These mechanisms are coercion, desperation, and self-interest. Most individuals who voluntarily participate in militant activity make decisions based on a combination of factors. A contributing factor is time in exile. A protracted crisis generally erodes humanitarian conditions, increases desperation, and allows militants to consolidate their position and resources.

*Coercion.* This usually takes the form of forced conscription by government or militant groups and particularly affects young men and children. For example, children are easy targets for abduction, especially when concentrated in a camp or separated from their families.<sup>53</sup> In the Democratic Republic of Congo, militant groups, including the government, have repeatedly targeted children in IDP settlements. In some cases, recently demobilized child soldiers are re-conscripted from their demobilization centers.<sup>54</sup>

*Desperation.* People are more likely to join a militant organization when they face starvation, loss of livelihood, disease, and other threats to their physical survival. Participation may be seen as the last possible opportunity to avoid death. In October 2009, as a protest against disruptions in food aid which reportedly caused the deaths of several children, Congolese refugees in Uganda barricaded the camp and their leaders issued press statements.<sup>55</sup> Although there seems to be little risk of these refugees joining a militant group, their anger and suffering clearly induced their protest. Recruitment induced by desperation is often characterized as “voluntary” but the nature of the individual’s motivation calls that into question.

*Affinity/self interest.* Displaced persons may participate in violence based on ethnic or ideological sympathies with a combatant group. They may join to satisfy a desire for revenge. Such a motivation may particularly apply to displaced people since it is extremely likely that they have suffered severe trauma. In some cases, an individual may support political violence from a perceived opportunity for economic gain.

In analyzing particular incidents of militarization, it becomes clear that these many factors are intertwined. For example, a 2009 Human Rights Watch report revealed that the Kenyan government was abetting the recruitment of Somali refugees (and ethnic Somali Kenyans) to fight with the Transitional National Government in Somalia. Apparently, the Kenyan government and Somali recruiters were motivated by the fear that the Somali armed group al-Shabaab would launch attacks

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, pp.15-16.

<sup>53</sup> Achvarina, Vera and Simon Reich. “Why Do Children ‘Fight’? Explaining the Rise of Child Soldiers.” *International Security* 31, 1 (Summer 1996) 127-164.

<sup>54</sup> Lischer, Sarah Kenyon. “War, Displacement, and the Recruitment of Child Soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo,” in *Child Soldiers in the Age of Fractured States*. Simon Reich and Scott Gates (eds.) (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, forthcoming Dec. 2009).

<sup>55</sup> CNN. “Refugees Protest Food Disruption in Uganda.” Oct. 27, 2009. Available at: <http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/africa/10/27/uganda.refugee.strike/index.html>.

on Kenyan soil. At the individual level, it seems that the recruits were motivated by a combination of desperation, affinity, and coercion. Most of the young men interviewed reported that they were offered lucrative payments to fight. In some cases, recruiters told them that they would be fighting for a United Nations force which was backed by the United States. After being driven away in Kenyan military vehicles, however, the recruits were treated poorly and not given the promised payments. The fact that so many of the young men escaped testified that the recruitment could not be considered as truly voluntary.<sup>56</sup>

### **Repatriation, Reintegration, and Violence**

Nearly all of the literature on displacement-related militancy threats focuses on the period of actual displacement. It is essential to pay attention to the return process, however, to prevent future violence and renewed displacement. While it is undoubtedly true that the vast majority of refugees simply desire to return home in peace to their previous lives, repatriation may not blunt the likelihood of political violence for previously militarized populations. In assessing the likelihood of violence, one should consider the nature of the repatriation and the success of reintegration process.<sup>57</sup>

The nature of repatriation can take three main forms: voluntary return, forced return (refoulement), and militarized return. In the ideal scenario, displaced populations return voluntarily and under peaceful conditions. Such a return implies that militarized groups have been neutralized through military force or by being brought into the political system. A forced return, initiated by either the sending or receiving state, is more likely to import the militancy threat back to the sending state. The coerced refugees might go back with their organizational structure intact and without a satisfactory resolution of the situation in the sending state. A militarized return, when the refugees and militants invade the sending state, paradoxically may reduce future violence. A successful militarized return, with a decisive victory over the government forces, will reduce the chance of active opposition. This occurred when the exile-based Rwandan Patriotic Front invaded Rwandan and took undisputed control of the government in 1994.

Discussions of repatriation often equate return to going home, but this is problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, returning refugees and IDPs may arrive in their country (or region) of origin, but often not to their actual homes and neighborhoods. Secondly, even if displaced return to their original homes, they may find an environment that is entirely changed, economically, socially, and politically. Thirdly, those who return may have little or no memory of home, depending on the length of time in exile. Refugees who remain dispossessed upon their repatriation may continue to lack protection, depending on the precariousness of their living situation. In some instances returnees who experience dispossession may even end up trading refugee status for IDP status. Thus, the same factors that led to the initial conflict and exile can reoccur when returnees remain in limbo and under threat. In such instances, returnees may embrace extremist movements as a way to ensure protection for themselves and their property.

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<sup>56</sup> Human Rights Watch. "Kenya: Stop Recruitment of Somalis in Refugee Camps." New York: Human Rights Watch, Oct. 22, 2009.

<sup>57</sup> Harpviken, Kristian Berg and Sarah Kenyon Lischer. "Refugee Return and Violence: An Analytical Framework." Paper presented at the workshop "Mobilizing Across Borders: Transnational Mechanisms of Civil War," sponsored by the School for International Studies Simon Fraser University and the Centre for the Study of Civil War, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo. Vancouver, Canada, Oct. 14-18, 2009.

### Regional Conflict Webs and Displacement: Sudan/Chad/CAR

When there's a genocide in Darfur...these are not simply African problems—they are global security challenges, and they demand a global response.

– President Barack Obama, July 2009

Civil wars in Africa (as elsewhere) rarely remain confined within national borders. Refugees, rebels, information, and material easily flow across porous state borders and can escalate human security threats to the level of international war. The region encompassing Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic perfectly illustrates such a web of violence. Currently, the 1,360 km border between Sudan and Chad has become a highly militarized and lawless zone of violence. The combination of rebel and refugee flows in both directions threatens to spark an international war. The hostilities between Chad and Sudan have played out as a proxy war involving anti-government rebel groups. Another ingredient in this conflict system is the Central African Republic (CAR), which borders Chad to the south. CAR rebel attacks in the north have pushed 48,000 refugees into southern Chad. Anti-government Chadian rebels also use the lawless northern border region of CAR to regroup.<sup>58</sup> Numerous of the security concerns discussed above afflict the populations displaced by this conflict. In particular, armed groups use the refugee and IDP populations as resources, targets, demographic pawns, and shields. At the individual level, a combination of coercion, desperation, and affinity influence the likelihood that a refugee or IDP will support political violence.

*Resources.* Sudanese rebel groups in Darfur, such as the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) view the refugees and IDPs as easy targets for recruitment and have conscripted boys and young men in the camps. This recruitment, both voluntary and involuntary, has occurred on both sides of the border. In March 2006, human rights groups reported that "Under the direction of the SLA Masalit commander, Khamis Abdulla Abaker, a Chadian Zaghawa, Djebir, was instrumental in organizing along with one hundred other rebels a recruitment campaign in the refugee camps of Treguine and Bredjing....It is estimated that the number of [recruits] was between 2,000 and 5,000."<sup>59</sup> UNHCR has confirmed the threat of refugee recruitment into armed groups in eastern Chad.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, the UN Panel of Experts on Darfur found that "JEM is actively engaged in recruiting children for use in armed conflict among the Darfuri refugees in Chad."<sup>61</sup>

Humanitarian aid and equipment also provide a valuable resource for armed groups. The staffs of aid organizations regularly risk theft, hijacking, abduction, and murder as they attempt to assist vulnerable civilians. Such violence diverts much needed resources into the hands of combatants and

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<sup>58</sup> Reuters. "Factbox-Chad-CAR-Sudan Triangle Is Crucible of Violence." Reuters AlertNet, Nov. 17, 2006. Available at: <http://www.alertnet.org>.

<sup>59</sup> Naftali, Mark. "Going Home to Fight? Explaining Refugee Return and Violence. Case Study; Eastern Chad/Darfur." International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (Summer 2009) unpublished manuscript, p.4.

<sup>60</sup> UNHCR. "UNHCR Global Appeal 2008-2009" (Geneva: UNHCR), p.125.

<sup>61</sup> Naftali, Mark. "Going Home to Fight? Explaining Refugee Return and Violence. Case Study; Eastern Chad/Darfur." International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (Summer 2009) unpublished manuscript, p.5; Matthews, Gabriela. "Chad Blog: Darfur's Men Vanish from Refugee Camp." Reuters AlertNet, April 14, 2006. Available at: <http://alertnet.org>; Human Rights First. "Written Submission to the United Nations Security Council Committee Established Pursuant to Resolution 1591 (2005) Concerning the Sudan." New York: Human Rights First, 2008, 1-9.



it also deters humanitarians from entering 'lawless' areas. Armed groups (both government and insurgents) can loot resources and use them as a bargaining chip in negotiating access. Even when they do not steal aid, it "can give considerable power to governments and armed actors that are able to influence where, how and to whom it is provided."<sup>62</sup>

*Targets.* Along the Chad/Sudan border, cross-border attacks have targeted refugees, IDPs, and local residents. The Sudanese government forces and allied Janjaweed militias have attacked refugee camps and local villages as part of an offensive strategy of intimidation. These attacks have extended the scorched-earth tactics of the militias across the border, resulting in hundreds of deaths. The Janjaweed invaders have struck as deep as 60 miles into Chad, raiding refugee camps and destroying scores of villages. Fighting between Chadian government forces and anti-government rebels has also endangered Sudanese refugees and Chadian IDPs. In December 2006, the government of Chad sent troops across the Sudanese border in hot pursuit of the rebel forces. Both states accuse the other of covertly supporting rebel forces and have mobilized along the border.<sup>63</sup>

*Demographic engineering.* The grim statistics in Darfur may give the impression that massive displacement and destruction are the tragic byproduct of war. In reality, forced migration is a central strategic goal in the conflict. The Sudanese government hopes to radically alter land ownership and population patterns in Darfur. Government forces, and allied Janjaweed militias, plan to achieve this by permanently displacing millions of subsistence farmers who are viewed as hostile to the central government. The terrifying abuses, such as mass rapes and torture that accompany this displacement ensure the future reluctance of the victims to return home. This strategy relates to the issue of repatriation and violence discussed earlier. Given the extensive destruction, it seems unlikely that repatriates will be able to return to their original homes and villages. Continuing displacement and disenfranchisement could stoke violence if not addressed with peace-building and compensation measures.

*Shield/sanctuary.* In addition to external attacks on camps, aid agencies report that militants have infiltrated the camps and terrorized the residents.<sup>64</sup> In September 2009, the government of Chad decided to relocate a refugee camp which was reportedly been used by Sudanese rebels as a base. Ouré Cassoni camp is located a mere 7 km from the Sudanese border and armed men threaten both refugees and aid workers.<sup>65</sup> Humanitarian organizations have strongly recommended that the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) set up a permanent presence in and around the camp to protect the population, but this seems unlikely to occur.<sup>66</sup>

*Individual factors.* At the individual level, all three mechanisms mentioned earlier – desperation, affinity, and coercion – are important in understanding the potential for militarization. The

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<sup>62</sup> Kahn, Clea and Elena Lucchi. "Are Humanitarians Fuelling Conflicts? Evidence from Eastern Chad and Darfur." *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine*, 43 (June 2009). Available at: <http://www.odihpn.org/report.asp?id=3010>.

<sup>63</sup> Agence France Presse, "Raiders Kill, Mutilate Civilians in Chad." Agence France Presse, Dec. 19, 2006; Miarom, Betel. "Chad Pursues Rebels Across Border into Sudan." Reuters AlertNet, Dec. 12, 2006. Available at: <http://alertnet.org>.

<sup>64</sup> Crilly, Rob. "Misery Deepens as Janjawid Infiltrate the Refugee Camps." *Times Online*, Nov. 17, 2006. Available at: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/>; Matthews, Gabriela. "Chad Blog: Darfur's Men Vanish from Refugee Camp." Reuters AlertNet, April 14, 2006. Available at: <http://alertnet.org>.

<sup>65</sup> Human Rights First. "Written Submission to the United Nations Security Council Committee Established Pursuant to Resolution 1591 (2005) Concerning the Sudan." New York: Human Rights First, 2008, 1-9.

<sup>66</sup> IRIN. "Chad: Relocating a Refugee Camp in Volatile East." Sept. 30, 2009. Available at: <http://www.irinnews.org/PrintReport.aspx?ReportId=86360>.



desperation of camp residents may influence how they respond to recruitment appeals. The horrendous conditions in the settlements for the displaced may lead some to consider any alternative as preferable to the current situation. For young men who lack education and employment, the lure of activity and power makes them more receptive to the militants' message.

The possibility of ethnic affinity may also play into individual decisions on supporting political violence. Many of the refugee camps are dominated by a particular ethnic group which correlates to a rebel group of the same ethnicity. For example, some camps have a large majority Zaghawa population, which may lead to an affinity for the primarily Zaghawa Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). In support of that idea, Naftali cites the findings of Jerome Tubiana that women in refugee camps encourage men to return home to Darfur and fight for their people.<sup>67</sup> Ethnic ties are also relevant to the nature and level of coercion directed at refugees. For example, Chadian President Idriss Déby is a Zaghawa and has provided support to the Justice and Equality Movement. Therefore, camp residents cannot expect much support from the Chadian government if they protest the activities of JEM militants. In fact, Human Rights First reported that Chadian National Army forces have joined in JEM's camp recruitment efforts.<sup>68</sup> Refugee militarization based on ethnic affinity seems most likely when combined with the mechanism of desperation.

### Potential Linkages with U.S. Security Interests

Refugees and IDPs in Africa have fled their homes after being traumatized, threatened, attacked, raped, and dispossessed. Although they left to escape conflict, their new accommodations sometimes prove even more dangerous. The security threats faced by displaced populations often stem from the inability or unwillingness of the receiving or sending states to provide protection. For example, in refugee camps in Chad, women have been raped with impunity by armed men, aid workers, and other refugees. When confronted, the spokesman for the Chadian government asserted, in contradiction to international law, "If there are cases of rape in the camps we cannot prevent them. The government is not responsible for security in the camps."<sup>69</sup> When the legally responsible government abdicates its responsibility for camp security, the rampant threats to human security may lead to regional and international threats. In such cases the only hope for stability comes from external actors, such as the United States.

In considering responses to threats associated with forced displacement, it is necessary to examine the causes of those threats. This will help determine which aspects of the security framework apply. The first step is assessing the cause of the crisis. Policymakers should ask whether displacement is a central strategy or an "unfortunate byproduct" of conflict. It stands to reason that encouraging repatriation and offering protection will be easier in cases where displacement is not a chief goal of one or more combatant groups. When displacement results from ethnic cleansing or demographic engineering, the crisis is more likely to escalate to a regional or international security threat.

Also, when dealing with security threats, such as attacks on camps, policymakers should try to discern the underlying causes. It could be that militants are mixed with the displaced population

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<sup>67</sup> Naftali, Mark. "Going Home to Fight? Explaining Refugee Return and Violence. Case Study; Eastern Chad/Darfur." International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (Summer 2009) unpublished manuscript, p.14.

<sup>68</sup> Human Rights First. "Written Submission to the United Nations Security Council Committee Established Pursuant to Resolution 1591 (2005) Concerning the Sudan." New York: Human Rights First, 2008, 1-9, pp.4-5.

<sup>69</sup> Maliti, Tom. "Report: Sudanese Refugees Face Rape Daily in Chad." Associated Press, Sept. 30, 2009.

while they stockpile weapons and recruit fighters, thus encouraging attacks by the sending state. Or, the militants may be using the unarmed refugees/IDPs as demographic pawns or bargaining chips. This may lead to attempts at forceful repatriation by the sending or receiving state. Knowledge of ethnic affinities, such as those that exist among the Chadian and Sudanese populations on the border, will provide valuable background information for potential interveners. Understanding the spark for the violence will determine the most effective way to respond.

Earlier I discussed the four main ways in which militants use displaced populations: as resources, targets, demographic pawns, and shields/sanctuaries. Obviously, the most effective response to those challenges is conflict prevention. Once a conflict has begun, however, it becomes difficult to prevent the movement of desperate and fearful people without violating their human rights and international law. Given that a displacement crisis exists, there are a number of actions that external actors can take to ameliorate those threats.

1. *Train local forces or peacekeepers in camp protection.* In situations where the receiving state is willing, but unable, to provide security, external training and funding could help protect the displaced populations. The effectiveness of this policy depends on the role of the receiving state in the cause of the militarization. A hostile receiving state, such as the government of Sudan regarding the IDPs in Darfur, is unlikely to allow such protection programs, since the state benefits from the insecurity. A possible model for this type of training is the Tanzanian Security Package which trained local police to improve camp protection in the 1990s. For the most part, the Tanzanian government wanted to prevent militarization but lacked the means to do so. (This program had numerous flaws, but might serve as an initial template.) Existing U.S. military programs may also be suited for this task.
2. *Protect aid workers and aid delivery.* The lack of assistance for basic needs increases human security threats for displaced populations. This shortfall may occur due to funding constraints, but a lack of aid may also stem from insecurity in the areas of need. For example, aid agencies are unable to access many areas in Darfur due to serious security threats, such as abduction, hijacking, and murder. Although some humanitarian organizations resist military involvement in their activities based on the principle of neutrality, others might welcome protection for their convoys and distribution points. The African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) currently lacks the capacity to provide that protection.

The difficulty of protecting aid workers and delivery also depends on the causes of the insecurity. When combatants view humanitarian aid as valuable war resources, they are more likely to resist efforts to protect the aid. In such cases, humanitarian resources can be used to increase regional security threats, as well as to undermine human security. For example, insecurity caused by opportunistic “bandits” requires a different response than calculated attacks on aid workers by government forces. The actions may be similar but the motivation for the violence and the likely use of the spoils call for different methods of prevention.

3. *Increase state capacity to police borders more effectively.* Many borders, such as that between Chad and Sudan, are porous and virtually unguarded (some would say nonexistent), allowing cross-border attacks against displaced people and local residents. More effective border control could prevent the free flow of fighters (both rebels and government forces) and lootable resources. A humanitarian concern, however, is that states will use increased border security to deny entry to

refugees and asylum seekers. Increasing state capacity should go hand in hand with training in international law regarding refugee protection.

4. *Assist in peaceful and voluntary returns of the displaced to their homes.* Ideally, repatriation can reverse demographic engineering and ethnic cleansing attempts. Assistance could be as simple as helping with logistics (such as transportation) or as broad as contributing to post-conflict peace building in the country of origin. Actions to prevent a forced or militarized return will strengthen post-conflict stability.

As one of the most significant U.S. policy tools in Africa, USAFRICOM will undoubtedly play an important part in addressing the security concerns related to forced displacement crises. According to the USAFRICOM website, the mission of the command is quite broad and non-traditional: “[it] conducts sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities, and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy.”<sup>70</sup> In an unclassified 2009 Command Brief, General William E. Ward stated that USAFRICOM’s focus is to enable “African partners to: reduce conflict, improve security, defeat violent extremism, and support crisis response.”<sup>71</sup> Admiral Robert T. Moeller, USN, the executive director of the USAFRICOM Transition Team further explained that the command’s main mission is preventing “problems from becoming crises, and crises from becoming conflicts.”<sup>72</sup>

A potential asset of USAFRICOM is its ability to take a regional, holistic approach to dealing with conflict. Because of the transnational nature of most conflicts, the fragmented peacekeeping efforts currently underway in the Sudan/Chad/CAR conflict cannot succeed. If the peacekeeping forces in one area manage to instill stability, the armed groups will merely slip across the border. This has occurred repeatedly in the Central Africa conflict area. Thus, it is essential to coordinate among the various peacekeeping missions in the region, as well as to strengthen their capacity.

Building trust so that African nations welcome the mission of USAFRICOM is an obvious prerequisite to success.<sup>73</sup> In his recent address to the Ghanaian parliament, President Obama assured his audience that “Our Africa Command is focused not on establishing a foothold in the continent, but on confronting these common challenges to advance the security of America, Africa, and the world.”<sup>74</sup> The more the interests of African governments and the U.S. government overlap, the more likely that cooperation will occur. The recent declaration by the African Union that commits members to protect internally displaced persons may provide an opening.<sup>75</sup> The ambitious goals of the IDP convention will require increased financial resources and capacity building, which might be

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<sup>70</sup> United States Africa Command Website, <http://www.africom.mil>.

<sup>71</sup> Ward, General William E. “Kip.” “United States Africa Command, Command Brief” (Unclassified), 2009.

<sup>72</sup> As quoted in Kfir, Isaac. “The Challenge that is AFRICOM.” *Joint Forces Quarterly*. Issue 49 (2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2008), 110-113, p.111.

<sup>73</sup> Berschinski, Robert G. “AFRICOM’s Dilemma: The ‘Global War on Terrorism,’ ‘Capacity Building,’ Humanitarianism, and the Future of U.S. Security Policy in Africa.” Strategic Studies Institute, Nov. 2007. Available at: <http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/>.

<sup>74</sup> Obama, Barack. “Remarks by the President to the Ghanaian Parliament, Accra International Conference Center, Accra, Ghana.” In *The White House*. Washington DC: Office of the Press Secretary.

<sup>75</sup> African Union. “African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention).” October 22, 2009. Available at: <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Conferences/2009/october/pa/summit/AU-IDP%20Convention%20-%20Assembly%20-%20Final%20-%2010.23%20pm%2023%20Oct.doc>.

appropriate activities for USAFRICOM. In addition to alleviating human suffering, implementation of the convention could make an important contribution to advancing human, regional, and international security.